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CARPIO

A Tragedy

BY

JOHN FINNAMORE

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CARPIO

A Tragedy

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

JOHN FINNAMORE

Author of "FRANCESCA VASARI"

Melbourne

GEORGE ROBERTSON

1875

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MELBOURNE:
PRINTED BY WALKER, MAY, AND CO.,
9 MACKILLOP STREET.

TO

RICHARD ANNESLEY BILLING, ESQ., M.A.,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW,

AS A SLIGHT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS UNVARYING
KINDNESS TO THE AUTHOR, AND HIS KINDLY
APPRECIATION OF A FORMER EFFORT
BY THE SAME WRITER,

This Play

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The story of Bernardo del Carpio has at all times been a favourite one with the dramatists and poets of Spain—no less than seven tragedies (as we are told), and innumerable ballads, having been composed on the subject in the language of that country. With the tragedies I have no acquaintance whatever; but there cannot be more resemblance between them and the present work than is the necessary consequence of the same story being treated by the authors of each: and my knowledge of the ballads is solely derived from perusing Lockhart's highly spirited translations.

Although the exploits of Carpio, and other matters dealt with in this drama, have been put forth by many historians as matters of fact, others have gone so far as even to deny that our hero ever had a physical existence. With this let the learned deal. But it was clearly my duty to avoid falsifying any *known* historical fact: and I have, therefore, among other things, rejected (notwithstanding its effectiveness) the obvious anachronism of representing Carpio as the hero of Roncesvalles, and the slayer of the immortal Rolando; the battle in question having been fought thirteen years before Alfonso the Chaste ascended the Asturian throne, and the events of this drama being supposed to occur in the latter portion of his reign.

The history, *quasi* history, or romance of Carpio, undoubtedly presents many attractions to the dramatist. But it appeared to me, viewing it as I elected to utilize it, to be deficient in what is sometimes called "female interest"—it being a general principle that no drama can be quite successful unless the sympathies of the reader or auditor are enlisted on behalf of some member of the gentler sex. To this consideration is due the introduction of the character of Margaret, the incidents connected with whom, as well as those comprising the Fourth and Fifth Acts of the play, are matters in respect of which I have to assume the sole responsibility.

In conclusion, I desire to call attention to the fact that I have deviated from the original story by making Saldana a prisoner at Oviedo, instead of at Luna. This was done in order the better to preserve "unity of place." And while I do not venture at present to express my views with regard to the unities, I think it will be conceded that they are matters proper for consideration when they do not materially affect other matters of possibly greater importance.

JOHN FINNAMORE.

MELBOURNE, *June*, 1875.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ALFONSO II., *surnamed "The Chaste," King of Asturias.*

RAMIRO, *son of* BERMUDOS, *the late King, and heir-apparent to the Throne.*

BERNARDO DEL CARPIO,
CARLOS,
VELASQUEZ,
GARCIAS,
FERDINAND,
SEBASTIAN,
GONSALEZ,
} *Nobles.*

A Monk.

RODRIGO, *a Soldier.*

BERTHA, *the Queen.*

MARGARET.

Nobles, Ladies, Officers, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

SCENE.—Oviedo, and the surrounding country.

PERIOD.—Early in the Ninth Century.

CARPIO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Oviedo—An open Court in the* KING'S *Palace—A Chapel.*

Enter CARLOS *and* FERDINAND.

Ferdinand. How long since Carpio joined the Spanish camp?

Carlos. Six years or more. He was a stripling then,
But soon his deeds made elder warriors yield
Their pride of place to him. Ere yet his chin
Could boast a beard, he slew in single fight
The giant chief, Orasmin.

Ferdinand. While in France,
I heard it stated that he once preserved
Alfonso's life.

Carlos. Ay, when a very boy.

Ferdinand. 'Twas when the Moors burst ope' the city gates,
And almost were our masters, was it not?

Carlos. It was, sir. This young Mars did make his way
Where brave men shrunk before the deadly peril:
And while we stood amazed and speechless all
At his undaunted act, the valiant youth,
With a boy's weapon, slew the king's opposer.
The deed is well remembered yet: it changed
The fortunes of the day. But who is here?

Enter GARCIAS.

Garcias. Fair gentlemen, good morrow to you both.
Most joyful news! Alfonso has proclaimed
The termination of our three days' fast.
In grace of the event, his Majesty
Has sent a special message to the queen,
That he will deign, at noon, to kiss her hand.
The court is all excitement at the news.

Ferdinand. Is it so great a wonder that our king
Should kiss his wife's hand?

Garcias. Ay: it is regarded
As a phenomenon. Whether it portends
Eruptions of the earth, or an eclipse,
I cannot say; but learned men predict
It is a boding that the Saracen
Will overrun all Europe.

Carlos. Soft, the king.

Enter the KING, *attended by a Monk; also,* VELASQUEZ, SEBASTIAN, *and others.*

King [*to* VELASQUEZ]. Now, sir, what wouldst thou with us? We are bent
To hear thee.

Velasquez [*kneeling*]. First, upon my knees——

King. Arise:
We do not doubt thy loyalty, nor seek
This crouching show of homage. We attend thee.

Velasquez. Let me not make the forfeit of your love,
If, in my country's name, I plead for one
That was my friend; whom five-and-twenty years
Of solitary durance at your hand
Have not estranged from you, his sovereign lord.

King. A bad beginning. But I'll hear you first,
And then—Proceed, my lord.

Velasquez. Saldana, sire.

King. Enough, sir,—I have heard enough. Count Carlos,
We did not see thee. *Benedicite!*
What tidings from Bernardo, since the Moors
Encamped at Luna?

Carlos. Nothing further, sire.
King. Heaven! give me years to see those infidels
Routed from out the land. If it be true,
As holy men have vouched, that I'm raised up,
And, through the perils which involved my sire
In an untimely end, sustained and saved,
To be the instrument of a great purpose,
Oh, make Thy servant worthy of his trust!
What think you, reverend monk? am I designed
For such an office?
Monk. It were sin to doubt
What hath been prophesied.
King. Amen!
Velasquez. My liege,——
King. I charge you, on your life——
Velasquez. What is my life
But a poor breath, whose worth is in the use
'Tis put to? While that breath is mine, my lord,
I'll spend it thus.
King. You sue to me in vain.
No; let him rot—rot in his dungeon! I
Have sworn he ne'er shall quit those walls alive—
And I will keep my oath.
Velasquez. His crime unknown——
King. It is not fit that I divulge the cause
For which I hate him. First, the dignity
Of monarchy I would uphold, whose high
And fixed authority disdains to plead
Where it commands, or to extenuate
The act whose proudest sanction is the will
That orders it. Nor is it meet the world
Should learn the story my indignant blood
Boils at remembrance of. Let it suffice
That I thus nourish my determined hate
From bitter provocation. And for you,
Be counselled in good time, nor longer urge
Your supplication for a wretch condemned.
Velasquez. I will not cease to tell thee thou dost wrong.
King. Beware!
Velasquez. I fear thee not.

King. Peace, poisonous reptile!
If ever thy rebellious tongue presume
To name again that canker to my peace,
Detested Saldane, in my hearing's scope,
Look forward to a doom more swift than his,
But not less terrible. Hence from my sight!
[*Exit* VELASQUEZ.
Forgive my wrath, O Saints of Heaven! Hark!

HYMN, *sung in the Chapel.*

Thou didst command—"Let day succeed the night,
Let there be light!"
The elements obeyed,
And giant Darkness fled, reluctant, but dismayed.

[*While the hymn is singing, the* KING *uncovers his head, which he rests on the Monk's breast.*

King. I have committed a most grievous sin
In giving way to anger.
Monk. Our chaste brother
Condemns himself too sternly.
King. 'Tis not so.
Weak as I am, and old, the rebel blood
Is hot within me, and excites my heart
To passions that are sinful. Holy father,
And you, my friends,—go in and pray for me.
I may not enter till I have done penance.
Carlos, remain. Pray for my sins, good people.
[*Exeunt into Chapel all but the* KING *and* CARLOS.

HYMN, *continued.*

Thine edict was made known. Amid the throes
Of Chaos rose
The golden god of Day,
In bright cerulean throned, and Nature owned his sway.

King. Give me thy hand. I've honored thee, and found
Repayment in thy loyalty and love,
Thy wisdom, and thy services. I doubt

Velasquez, and his purpose. Hast thou noted—
I know thou hast—his coldness in our interest—
The heat with which he urged Saldana's cause ?
He is a traitor : keep thine eye upon him.
Carlos. I oft myself have begged Saldana's freedom——
King. Thou didst not know his crime. I'll tell it thee.
I had a sister once—Once, do I say ?
Ay, Carlos, *once*—for I have razed her name
Out of our house's records, and she is
To me a thing unloved—almost forgotten.
You knew her, as I think ?
Carlos. The fair Ximena.
King. Fair ! She was fair, but not for that I loved her.
I saw that she was beautiful ; for I
Could trace, as others might, the lines that gave
Her form its symmetry ; and, not unmoved,
Could view the lustre of her eye ; the soft
And delicate complexion of her cheek ;
The pearls half-hidden by her coral lips ;
The auburn hair that wantoned o'er her neck,
Rippling and shining, as the limpid stream
By summer sunset gilded. I designed
Her beauties for the cloister.
Carlos. Did she not
Embrace its solitude ?
King. She did—but how ?
Tainted, corrupt, a votary of earth
And its delusive pleasures. And the slave
Who insolently balked my dearest wish
Was Saldane.
Carlos. Can it be——
King. I know, my friend,
What you would say. Not so. A mockery
Of marriage passed between them—some false priest
United them—some monk I would have scourged
For daring to defy me, had not death
O'erta'en him ere my vengeance. I discovered
The secret of their nuptials by the signs
She could not hide, and forced from her the truth.
Then, in the tempest of my wrath, I plunged

The hated Saldane in his dungeon, where
The light of day shines never, and the slime
Breeds noxious weeds, and lingering disease,
And reptiles so consorted with the place
That *one* pure ray of sunshine would destroy them.
There let him waste his miserable life
In agonized remorse, and call for death—
The solitary blessing which my hate
Cannot deprive him of—the only hope
That lies between him and the world beyond.

Carlos. And the Infanta?

King. I concealed her state
From the whole court, until—accursèd day!—
Her child beheld the light. When she recovered,
I forced her to a convent.

Carlos. Let me ask
One question more. Her offspring——

King. 'Twas a boy.
Canst thou not guess?

Carlos. The period of her absence
Accords with Carpio's age.

King. Thou aim'st aright.
To thee alone, my Carlos, have I told
The secret of *his* birth—and *my* deep shame.

Carlos. 'Tis in my bosom lodged as in a grave.

King. Thou know'st the cause, now, of that quenchless hate
I bear to Saldane. To thy mind, perhaps,
It may seem disproportioned to the wrong,
But not to mine. Man's ingenuity
Could not devise a torture great enough
To satiate my desire.

[*Music within the Chapel.*

Hark! 'tis the hymn
Of parting. Let's away—I would not now
Be gazed upon. Let me lean on thee, Carlos.

[*As they go out, the following is sung within the Chapel.*

HYMN, *continued.*

As with primæval night, our souls within
Are black with sin.
Oh, be it Thy decree
That we may seek and find eternal light in Thee!

[*Scene closes in.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Palace.*

Enter the QUEEN *and* MARGARET.

Queen. Still sad, my Margaret? Let us beguile
The tedious moments, as they pass, with tales
Of love and valour. Prithee, dearest child,
Assume at least the guise of mirth. Methinks
There's no such thing as real happiness;
But yet it soothes us to deceive ourselves
By the mere outward semblance of a joy
We feel not in our hearts.

Margaret. Sweet lady, pardon:
I have not learned to hide my sorrows yet.

Queen. Confide thy griefs to me. Why art thou sad?

Margaret. Dared I but speak——

Queen. Then wouldst thou speak of love.
Why art thou silent? I have read thy heart
And know thy secret. I could breathe a name
That would the lilies of thy cheek displace,
And plant the rose instead. Thou lovest Carpio.

Margaret [*kneeling*]. My queen, forgive me.

Queen. Wherefore dost thou kneel?

Margaret. Do not desert me. I have never dared
So to forget my own unworthiness
As to indulge a thought of being his;
Or, if I did, I have rebuked myself,
And then was humbler than before. My hope—
My only hope—was to love on in secret,
And die at last—his name upon my lips.

Queen. Fear not that I will chide thee, gentle child—
Nor think too lowly of thine own deserts.
Such charms as thine, dear Margaret, have oft
Plunged nations into warfare, as, of old,
Fair Helen's did; and beauty less than thine
Hath been the priceless purchase, and the pledge,
That won contending princes back to peace.
Nay, dry thine eyes—my sovereign lord approaches.

Enter the KING, CARLOS, GARCIAS, FERDINAND, SEBASTIAN, *and Courtiers.*

King. Bertha, our Queen.
Queen. The saints protect Alfonso!
King. Thou hast our thanks. And let it not be deemed
Disparagement unto thy worth, my queen,
That we so rarely see thee, whom to see
More often were to make this sinful nature
Idolatrous and perjured. The great vow
To which I bound myself when I assumed
Asturias' sceptre at Bermudo's hand,
Prescribes this life of chastity; but yet,
As token of the grace with which we view
Your numerous perfections, thus we venture
To kiss your royal hand.
Garcias [*apart to* FERDINAND]. Some wives prefer
To have their lips kissed rather than their hands.
King. My Margaret, come near me—nearer yet.
The bloom is on thy girlhood's cheek. Methinks
Each day you grow more lovely, as the spring,
Fanned by approaching summer's breath, each day
Unfolds a richer beauty.
Margaret. Dear my liege,
You ever were too kind to your poor child.
King [*aside*]. My child! She hits too near the truth.
'Tis there
My reputation's 'perilled. [*Aloud*] Margaret,
Canst thou recall thy early childhood's days,
And thy dear native country where we found thee?
Margaret. My own sweet France!

King. Ay, speak to me of France.
Say on, my girl.
Margaret. I can remember it
Since, when a child, I played among the vines
That grew within the silent convent walls;
Or listened, breathless, to the holy chaunt
Of pious nuns, whose gentle voices seemed
By angels wafted to the throne of God!
I can remember, too, when first they told me
I was an orphan.
King. Thou art not an orphan!
Girl, seek to know no further—and be all
These clouded memories forgot. Thy country
Henceforth is Spain, and dearer than a father's
Shall be thy monarch's love.

[*A horn sounded without.*

But hark! that note
Announces news from Carpio. Let the envoy
Be summoned hither. [*Exit* GARCIAS.
Queen. By your gracious leave,
We will withdraw.
King. Your wish accords with ours—
For tales of strife befit not woman's ear.
Farewell, our noble queen.

[*Exeunt* QUEEN *and* MARGARET.

Has he not come?
My heart's exultant with prophetic fire.
Heaven has heard our prayers, and with strong arm
Has smote the infidel!

Enter GONSALEZ, *followed by* GARCIAS.

King. You're welcome, sir.
Gonsalez. I am commissioned by Bernardo, Count
Of Carpio, upon my knees to pay
His duty to your majesty. That done,
To tell you that at Salamanca he
Repelled the Moors, who with a loss retired
Of fifteen thousand men.

King. What loss is ours?

Gonsalez. Our loss is not so great. The total slain
Does not exceed four thousand, of which number
Three-fourths are men, the rest are mules and horses.

King. So few!

Gonsalez. Arcos is slain, and Alvarez
Is wounded to the death. Two hearts more brave
Are not in Spain.

King. I have two friends the less.
How did the Count Bernardo bear himself?

Gonsalez. My liege, he hacked away as others did.
His greatest glory is that the field's won;
He next rejoices that his throat is whole;
And thirdly, sends your majesty his love.
I am commanded to deliver, sire,
This letter from Bernardo to his king.

King. Your name, sir?

Gonsalez. Gonsalez.

King. Within what time
May we expect the Count?

Gonsalez. Ere noon to-morrow.

King. Public rejoicings we'll defer till then.
Meanwhile, be thou our guest; and for your part
In this great victory, 'twill be our care
To do you special honour. What is here?
[*Opens scroll, and reads.*

Gonsalez [*aside*]. Some kindly goddess prompt a mild reply!
He starts and frowns—the colour leaves his face.
Excellent signs of generous intent!
His first kind act will be to tear the letter.
No, by the saints! he only crushes it.

Carlos. What moves your Majesty?

King [*aside*]. The secret's known,
And every common soldier in the camp
Will boast acquaintance with the mystery
I would have kept concealed. Not convent bars,
Nor Moorish chains, could keep her from her son,
Nor hide the hateful story.

Carlos. Sire——

King [*aside*]. Enough—
Let me anticipate Bernardo's course,
And court exposure ere 'tis thrust on me.
[*Aloud.*] Read, Carlos, read this scroll. Attend, my lords,
If ye would learn a monarch's mystery.
Read, Carlos, read.

Carlos [*reads*]. "Sire and Uncle,—I have discovered the secret of my birth. At the beginning of the war, Ximena the Infanta, your sister, and my honoured mother, who had escaped from the convent only to be made a prisoner by the Moors, was by me rescued, and she has told me all. Let your enmity be buried in her grave, for she is dead. To-morrow, sire, I shall throw myself before your feet, and humbly entreat you to liberate my poor father, the Count of Saldana, that by your so doing you may for ever command the gratitude and services of

"Your most loyal subject and loving nephew,
"BERNARDO."

My liege, be merciful.

King. Though his appeal
Were backed by all the powers of earth and hell,
I would repel the suit, and dare them all!
You kneel in vain. [*To* GONSALEZ, *who is kneeling.*

[*Exeunt* KING, CARLOS, *and others.*

GONSALEZ, GARCIAS, FERDINAND, SEBASTIAN, *and others, manent.*

Gonsalez [*starting up*]. Kneeling be out of fashion
From this time forth. I'll bind these limbs in iron,
So that they shall not bend an inch beyond
What may be needed to bestride my horse,
Or trudge on foot with comfort.

Garcias. I'm amazed!

Gonsalez. At what?

Garcias. That Carpio should be Saldane's son.

Gonsalez. Is't wonderful a man should have a father?
To me, good sir, it would be strange indeed
Came he into the world without one. Soft!
Whom have we here?

Enter VELASQUEZ.

If I conceive aright,
Velasquez stands before me.
Velasquez. Sir, the same.
Gonsalez. I greet you as the comrade of Saldana.
But, stay—are we all friends?
Ferdinand. In Saldane's cause
I'll shed my heart's best blood.
Garcias. Is it not true
That for some crime, too horrible to name,
He suffers this imprisonment?
Gonsalez. *What* crime?
Is any here can tell its nature? None.
Not one in Spain, except the king—who fears
To utter it. Was it a crime, my friends,
When, from the mighty Alpuxarras' heights,
He and his force rushed down upon the Moors,
And strewed upon the snow their carcasses?
Was it a crime that he did save our country
From Mahomet's abhorred worshippers?
Preserved it to the king who has condemned him—
Who, for his realms, has paid him with a dungeon,
And, for his sceptre, given only chains!
Garcias. 'Tis truth, by Heaven! I'm with you!
Omnes. So are all!
Gonsalez. What says Velasquez?
Velasquez. Speak your purpose boldly.
Gonsalez. Then keep your caps off still—in the king's presence—
And bow as heretofore. Harkye, my lords.
Bernardo secretly arrived with me,
And will to-night, outside the city gates,
Approaching twelve, be taking the night air
To cool his hot blood. I'll be there as well;
And if *your* veins are filled with the like fire,
You'll seek your health, perchance, in the same way.
Velasquez. Till then, 'twere best we part.

Gonsalez. Right—'tis not fit
So many feverous patients crowd together.
Remember—twelve.

[*Exeunt different ways.*

SCENE III.—*Outside Oviedo—Night.*

BERNARDO DEL CARPIO *discovered.*

Carpio. Ye walls, that lift your black and ponderous forms,
Piercing the misty clouds, and, in your strength,
Confronting the wild elements that make
These herbless rocks their home—Bernardo greets you
As though he were your friend! For in those days
Of jovial boyhood, when each hour brought pleasure,
'Twas my delight to contemplate your strength
And solemn majesty. Yet, were the force
Of fabled Hercules within these arms,
And I could tear ye stone from stone, I'd make
Your piles a mockery of what they were,
And fell your proud heights level with your base,
That o'er your ruins Saldane might pass free!
The sound of footsteps. Gonsalez?—'tis he.

Enter GONSALEZ.

My faithful Gonsalez, we meet again.
Speak, what success? 'Tis with my heart I listen.
You saw the king?

Gonsalez. My gracious lord, I saw him.

Carpio. What says he to my suit? Why do you pause?
Tell in one word your news—or good, or bad.

Gonsalez. Partly of both, my lord.

Carpio. That cannot be:
For if my father's liberty be gained,
The glorious news shall fill my bosom's space,

And leave no envious corner for dejection
To make his baleful seat; but if thou say'st
His freedom is denied—O saints of Heaven,
What then is left me but despair!

Gonsalez. I'll tell thee:
Hope still remains.

Carpio. And when hope fails?

Gonsalez. Revenge!

Carpio. Revenge? I will not think of that. And hope?
Have I not hoped, and am I not deceived?

Gonsalez. Your friends——

Carpio. Speak on—all may not yet be lost.

Gonsalez. Velasquez, Ferdinand, Nepotiano—

Carpio. Are *they* upon our side?

Gonsalez. Their hearts are fire,
And leap to right your cause. I have arranged
That they shall meet you here. The hour is nigh—
And yonder look, my lord, where two approach.

Carpio. Give me thy hand. I'll be what thou wouldst have me.
The slave repines, meeting an obstacle
Which brave men grapple with, and may o'ercome.
I'll cast aside these weak complaints 'gainst fortune—
Smile upon adverse fate—and bid defiance
To all that may oppose my glorious aim!

Gonsalez. Now is there hope indeed. Keep this resolve,
And all the malice of the chaste Alfonso
Shall fail to keep your father in his dungeon.

Enter VELASQUEZ *and* FERDINAND.

Velasquez, and the noble Ferdinand.

Carpio. Welcome, my friends. Count [*to* FERDINAND], hitherto our paths
Through life have lain apart. I grasp thy hand,
And breathe a hope that henceforth thou and I
May, as our hands, so find our hearts united.

Ferdinand. With my whole soul I do repeat your wish.

Carpio. For thee, Velasquez — Saldane's friend and mine—

Thus I renew the promise of my love.

[*Embraces him.*

What tidings bring you ?

Ferdinand. You have heard, Alfonso
Has but this very day proclaimed his will
Immovable to be that Saldane ne'er
Shall bid good morrow to the light of heaven.
Upon solicitation of Velasquez,
Who set therein the peril of his life,
He thus pronounced.

Carpio [*to* VELASQUEZ]. Still, still my thanks are yours.
We'll speak of this anon. May we expect
More friends to-night ?

Gonsalez. See, Garcias and Sebastian
Approach us yonder.

Enter GARCIAS *and* SEBASTIAN.

Carpio. Give me each a hand.
To both, my thanks—to both, my dearest welcome.

Velasquez. To baffle spies, we did disperse our paths.
Others arrive.

Enter a number of Lords, different ways.

Carpio. To each a several greeting.

Gonsalez. Lords and Asturians, we are met to-night,
The best means to contrive whereby to gain
The liberty of Saldane. Should we need
Another spur to rouse our sympathies,
We have it in the knowledge that he gave
A son to us, whose warlike qualities
Have made Asturias great and terrible
Unto her foes. Here I stand forth, and pledge
Myself to Saldane's cause. Who seconds me ?

Garcias. Garcias !

Omnes. And I !

Velasquez. And every honest heart
In Christian Spain !

Carpio. Friends, ere you do commit
Your honours to my keeping, you shall learn

Wherefore Saldana suffers in his dungeon
The traitor's penalty.
Velasquez. Speak on, Bernardo.
Carpio. If 'tis a crime to love, and sanctify
That love by holy marriage, then my father
May have deserved his punishment. He loved
The sister of Alfonso, 'gainst whose will
He married her; nor sought he ought to know
Save that his passion fondly was returned.
This was the deep iniquity—this only—
Which, by Alfonso's order, even now
My father expiates in chains.
Ferdinand. Let's turn
Our arms against this king, and hurl him from
The throne which he dishonors.
Sebastian. I am yours,
To stand or fall with you in the attempt.
Garcias. So are we all!
Omnes. All!
Carpio. Wherefore should we seek
For vengeance, lords? We stand on holier ground,
And ask for justice only.
Ferdinand. Should we fail
To win the king?
Carpio. First, fail—and on that failure
Devise our future course. Are we all friends
Of liberty, that in the solemn night
Have thus assembled? Shall we then behold
The hero who has saved our liberties
And with his blood our safeguards has cemented,
Lose his own freedom, and himself become
The easy victim of a tyrant's hate?
Behold yon rugged rock, by lightnings scarred,
Hoary and haggard made by the wild strife
Of warring elements—yet standing there,
In mute defiance of the tempest's rage.
But Man has conquered it, and made it serve
His purposes, hewing its entrails out
To make vile, reeking, pestilential caves,
Which he calls dungeons. And in such a place,

For five-and-twenty years, of which each day
Would seem a century, has Saldane lain,
Chained to the clammy rock, and ravenous
For want of food; starved in the icy air—
His life a hell on earth, and death a heaven!
While I, whose very breath
Was Saldane's gift—while you, whose liberties
You stand as debtors for to him—have lived
In the enjoyment of the gladdening sun,
The rivers, and the mountains, the fresh air,
The sense of freedom, and the countless gifts
By Heaven bestowed on man. Shall this be so
For ever? Spaniards, no! Let's give to him
The liberty he gave to us. Let's claim it
Even of the king: boldly and fearlessly,
Conscious we ask a right. But, in the heat
And passion of that knowledge, let us not
Forget, my lords, that he is still our king.

[*Shouts of "Saldane and Freedom!" "Live Bernardo!" &c.*

Velasquez. Pronounce the pledge, my lord, that we must swear to.

Carpio. Unsheath your swords, and cross their points with mine.

[*They do so, forming a semi-circle about him.*

This is our oath. First, that we try all means
Which fair entreaty offers to obtain
My father's liberation. Foiled in that
(As let me fondly hope we shall not be),
Pledge we our several powers by force to gain
What will have been denied unto our prayers;
Yet so far only deal with force as this
Our end requires; and, Saldane's freedom gained,
Renew allegiance to our king.

Omnes. We swear!

[*All kiss the hilts of their swords.*

Carpio. Behold, the moon has risen in the east,
And from her sacred mansion witnesses
Our solemn oath!

END OF ACT THE FIRST.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Room of State in the Palace.—A Balcony at Back; the Palace Gardens beyond. A Dais with a Throne.*

The KING *and* QUEEN *on Throne, discovered. Also, near the* QUEEN, MARGARET, *and Ladies, &c. Also,* RAMIRO *(standing before the Throne); and* CARLOS, GONSALEZ, SEBASTIAN, FERDINAND, VELASQUEZ, *&c.*

Trumpet as the Curtain rises.

King. Noble Ramiro, when your saintly sire
Obeyed the call of Heaven, and for the Church
Resigned the crown which now I wear, preferring
An everlasting diadem above,
I vowed that you, his son, and my successor,
Should be instructed how to rule the land
With even justice, firmness, dignity—
Your every thought your country's and your God's.

Ramiro. This have I heard, my liege, and 'tis my grief
That lengthened absence in a foreign land
Has hitherto deprived me of your counsel.

King. It therefore pleases me that you this day
Shall be a witness of my conduct here.
If (howsoever sorely I be pressed)
You see me yield to weakness, let your scorn
Fall heavy on me, and example take
Rather from boys or women than from me.
Your hand, dear prince—your honored place is here.

[*Hands* RAMIRO *to a position at his right, on the Dais.*

Let the shrill trumpet sound. [*Trumpet*] Bid Carpio enter.
[*Exit an Officer.*

Re-enter Officer, with CARPIO.

Bernardo, we attend thee. Speak, what wouldst thou?
Carpio. Suffer me, king, to thank you for this hearing,
And thus to vow my loyalty, by all
The honors of my knighthood. [*Kneels.*
King. Can we trust
This pledge of yours when even now you're here
To plead a traitor's cause?
Carpio. A traitor, sire!
Saldana is no traitor. [*Rises.*
King. For thyself,
Thou art our sister's son, and in so far
As ties of blood may claim we fain would love thee.
We know beside, and do appreciate
Thy services: but for the Count thy father,
His doom is sealed.
Carpio. And shall thy sister's son
Plead vainly with thee for his father's life?
And shall the services which you acknowledge
Go unrewarded? Think me not too vain
If I, the better to advance my cause,
Recall them to your memory. My liege,
Mine has not been a maiden's arm, nor useless;
But oft in fields that have been swamped with gore
I've fought for you, and triumph still has sat
Upon my arm. Your foes I made my own,
Your friends were mine, your greatness my ambition.
King. We do admit your prowess.
Carpio. Hear me yet.
Once, when the Moor assailed you at your gate,
Your enemies prevailed, your friends fell back:
Prostrate on earth you lay; above your head
Swung the descending scimitar, and death,
Instant and certain, hung upon the stroke.
I (then a boy of scarcely fifteen years)
Leapt on your enemy, and grappling him
By the swart throat, whilst he in vain essayed

To dash me to the ground, I plunged my dagger
Deep in his neck: then, with one mighty bound,
And one wild shriek of mortal agony
That cleft the air, his quivering mass fell down,
And rolled before your feet.

Gonsalez [*apart to* VELASQUEZ]. Dost mark the king?

Carpio. And shall the only recompense I ask—
My father's liberation—be denied?
Shall it be charged against your justice, king,
That—all Saldana's victories forgot—
You kept him chained and rotting in a cell,
Even while his son did rally round your throne
The thousands that did wait on his command,
Shedding their blood as heaven pours down rain,
To keep secure your kingdom and your life?
I'd not believe it, though the saints had sworn't,
And on the everlasting rocks which form
The fortress of Asturias had engraved
The living lie! Thou canst not, king, refuse
That which I ask.

King. Your suit is proudly urged.

Carpio. Am I too arrogant? Oh, bend, my knee,
And humbly thus let me entreat your favour!
[*Kneels.*

King. Arise, Bernardo.

Carpio. Let me ever kneel
Till mercy find a place within your heart.

King. Are there not crimes so black that mercy for
Their perpetrator were itself a crime?

Carpio. And what my father's crime? 'Twas only love.
He loved Ximena——

King [*starting up*]. By the saints of Heaven,
I swear he would have less incurred my wrath
Had he essayed to circumvent my power,
And, with intent rebellious, to o'erthrow
My consecrated throne!

Queen [*kneeling*]. My dearest husband,
If in your prayers I ever was remembered,
If in your heart I hold a place of love,
If I have been your true and faithful wife,

Holding your slightest word my oracle——
King. Rebellious queen, that lov'st mine enemies
'Bove me, thy husband, and anointed king,
Go to thy chamber—go!
Queen. Oh, hear me yet.
King. Shall I be disobeyed? Away, I say!
[*Strikes at her.*
No murmur, but begone.
Margaret. Shame, shame, O king!
King. False minion, dost thou scorn us?
Margaret. Oh, my liege,
Wert thou as great as Christian Charlemagne,
That coward blow had robbed thee of thy state,
And made thy honour vile!
King. Traitress!
Carpio. Brave wench!
King. Peace on your life. Methinks I know the cause
Of this brave indignation. Lovers' eyes
Betray too much—and I have noticed thine.
[*To* MARGARET.
'Tis not the queen thou lovest, but the suit
For which she pleaded; nor, indeed, the suit,
But him who urged it. Minion, be advised;
And if thy wayward fancy should be set
Upon this traitor who has dared to brave me,
Pluck from thy heart thy love; and if thou fail,
Drink deadly poison rather than incur
The awful penalty that now hangs o'er thee.
Carpio. Tyrant, beware—tempt not your fate too far.
King. Bertha, begone, and take yon maiden with you.
Queen. My duty is obedience. Heaven protect us!
[*Exeunt* QUEEN *and* MARGARET.

King [*to* CARPIO]. Hear me, hot youth—and then be hushed for ever.
You say your father's crime was love. 'Tis false.
Love may have been the prelude to his crime,
But not the crime itself. His crime was this:
To set at nought my will, and in the face
Of the Most High, to stamp me perjurer—

An abject slave, unable to fulfil
The vow I freely made. Love, say you? No—
'Twas a degenerate and sordid passion.
With traitorous intent to seize the crown
He won your mother to assist his plans;
Nor did he care what fate might her befall,
So that he gained his end, or saved himself.

Carpio. I swear it is not true. As Heaven shall judge,
You wrong my father, king. Away, Velasquez!

Velasquez. Forbear, I say.

Carpio. I will not be controlled,
Nor cease remonstrance, till this infamy
Is hurled back to the hell from whence it came!

King. Leave his arms free. 'Tis fit that traitor sires
Should bring forth traitor sons.

Carpio. Hear me, proud king;
And brand me as a villain void of grace
If I say aught, and cannot prove it true.
When first, my liege, you sat upon the throne,
As with one voice the people and the troops
Gave vent to their displeasure; for they thought
Your majesty more fitted for a priest
Than to be ruler of this warlike land.
Within a month an army was collected
With purpose to dethrone you, and to place
Saldana in your stead. But he, my liege—
This *traitor*, as *you* call him—proved your friend
When all deserted you; and at the head
Of his own retinue did stand between
You and your foes. The simple proof of *this*
Renders abortive the disgraceful charge
That you have dared to make against his honour.

King. He feared the issue of the enterprise,
Else he had joined it. For thyself, learn this:
If I permit thy insolence to live,
'Tis that thou own'st some portion of my blood;
But, lest forbearance should become a sin,
Let not to-morrow's dawn behold thee here:
Thy life might be in danger.

[*Exeunt* KING, CARLOS, *and others.*

CARPIO *and his partisans, manent.*

Carpio. Worthy king
To fight for!
Velasquez. You should not have broken out
Into this tempest.
Carpio. Death! Was I to hear
My father slandered thus? To smile assent
To every lie he spake? To bare my back,
And meekly to receive the royal lash?
The insolent tyrant spurned his patient queen
As I would not have spurned a loathsome cur,
Though, swoln with festering disease, it crawled
About me like a fiend of hell. Not break
Into this tempest, say you? But you're right—
My rage was impotent.
Gonsalez. 'Twas not, Bernardo.
Alfonso quailed before your haughty glance,
And from his shifting eye the coward peeped.
He has not been accustomed thus to hear
His faults recounted.
Velasquez. Still 'twas most unwise
To wake him to suspicion.
Carpio. It was not.
Oh, what a pleasing, easy task 'twould be,
To win Alfonso through his sympathies!
This king—this worthy brother of my mother—
This precious uncle—this dear hypocrite,
That speaks as though his goodness and his gold
Had purchased Paradise—this chaste Alfonso,
That keeps his vow because his blood is cold—
This sanctimonious breather of revenge,
That from his prayers omits his enemies—
This hater unprovoked—this sceptred braggart—
Fears but the daring, overawes the meek.
Shall we submit, that he may buffet us,
As masters do their mules? We'll force him, lords,
To yield his prisoner up. But if we fail,
One grand resource our fortunes will reserve
Between us and despair—to be revenged!

Ferdinand. Or first, or last, my lord, your cause is ours.
Velasquez. These walls have ears, my lord. Let us not here
Dilate upon our plans.
Carpio. I care not where!
Velasquez. Then hasten to the king, your purpose speak,
And for your pains be chained within a cell.
Are you prepared to sacrifice your hopes
For the poor luxury of giving voice
Immediate to your wrongs? The time *will* come
When with propriety you may proclaim
Your purpose to the world—but 'tis not now.
Carpio. Velasquez, there are moments when the wrongs
Long treasured quietly within our hearts
Are, by some accident—a word—a breath—
Disturbed in their repose. At such a time
Shoots the hot blood of passion through our veins,
And in the torrent reason is submerged.
'Tis so with me: but with a desperate will
Do I drive back the stream unto its source,
And dam the current up. *Now* speak, Velasquez,
And I will hear you calmly.
Velasquez. Let us meet
Within an hour beyond Saint Jago's cross.
Carpio. The time and place, my lord, are somewhat near.
To-morrow morning be it, on Naranco,
Each with his forces. And in case the king
Should change his merciful decrees, and seek
To mew us up in prisons, I commit
To you, brave Gonsalez, the immediate duty
Of organizing in the city here
Sufficient force to shield us, if required.
To-morrow, friends, we meet prepared for mischief.
And now, a short farewell.
Velasquez. Farewell, my lord.

[*Exeunt all but* CARPIO.

Carpio. Our passions are our masters. Still we place
Our lives and fortunes on the doubtful chance

Of feelings which are uppermost. We strive
To rear our future on a firmer base,
Which we call reason—but in vain—we fall
Or rise but by the accident which makes
Our impulse vain or fortunate. One dread
Hangs ever o'er me, as the impending sword
O'er Damocles. Whether I wake or sleep—
Ay, though my sleep may be without a dream—
One fear is ever present to my mind.
This is it—that the king may baffle me,
And raze unto the dust my high-built hopes,
By one dire act—the murder of my sire.
Of what avail, then, would be victory,
If he for whom I fought lay cold within
The unrestoring tomb? Ye heavenly powers,
Will ye permit this tyrant to exult
Much longer in his vengeance? Will ye pledge
Your friendship to his evil, and desert
The cause of justice? Has my father sinned
So deeply 'gainst your holy ordinance
That to the mercy of a king who's void
Of mercy ye resign him? Aid my arms,
That I may rescue him. 'Tis not the thirst
Of victory, ambition, power, impels me
To the resort I purpose. Read my soul:
If there inscribed you find one meaner thought
Than filial love and duty sways me on
To the appeal of force, desert me then,
Champion your fates upon the counter side,
And let Saldana perish! Who is here?
The lady Margaret.

Enter MARGARET.

How fares the queen?

Margaret. It was her wish that I should seek you out,
And tell you what has passed.

Carpio. Speak on—I listen.

Margaret. The queen and I were seated in her chamber,
When, unannounced, the king, with wrathful brow,
Appeared before us, and in bitter terms

Reproached us both as traitors to his crown.
Our gracious mistress, pale and trembling, rose,
Her terror-stricken gaze fixed on the king,
Her breathing stifled, senseless of his words,
And conscious only of the scathing fire
That seemed to issue from his vengeful eyes:
Then, with a wailing cry, her strength gave way;
And, while she fainting lay within my arms,
He fiercely cried, "Say to her, when she wakes,
She shall have escort to the prince her brother:
She leaves to-morrow morn."
Carpio. 'Tis better so—
Where'er she be, farthest from him is best.
Thanks, thanks for that, most merciful of tyrants!
What further said he?
Margaret. Some dark threats he uttered
Concerning thee; wherefore the queen entreats
That you consult your safety, good my lord,
By quick departure.
Carpio. Let him dare to place
A finger on my head! But he is wise,
And will not venture on so dear a risk.
Enough of that. Something you've left untold,
Which, from the dear respect I hold you in,
It is my wish to know. Did he say aught
Affecting thee? Why art thou silent, girl?
What meaning has that blush? and why those tears?
Margaret. 'Tis nothing!
Carpio. Nothing?
Margaret. What he spake to me
I do not heed. It is enough to know,
Whate'er his power, he cannot force my will.
Carpio. He cannot force your will? Force it to what?
To love? Oh, tell me, Margaret, is it that?
If there be any meaning in your words
'Tis this, that he would wed you 'gainst your choice.
Speak, tell me if it be so, Margaret,
And let me know to whom?
Margaret. Ramiro.
Carpio. No!

I will not let him graft on such a bough,
So fair a rose. Look in my eyes, dear girl—
Look in my eyes. Say, hast thou ever loved?
Margaret. What means my noble lord?
Carpio. When first I knew you,
You were a simple child, on whose clear brow
The ripeness of ten summers scarce had set
The seal of its luxuriance. It was then
My chief delight to listen to your voice,
Lisping our Spanish tongue, and mingling with
Our words the soft sounds of your native French,
Each melting in the other; and to teach you
The mysteries of our language, till its song
Came freely from you, but adorned and graced
With accent unaccustomed.
Margaret. Good my lord——
Carpio. Oh, it was rapture, in those bygone days
To see you, in your robes of maiden white,
Joyous and pure—light as the fleeting roe—
Each day, fresh graces budding in your form—
Each hour, fresh beauties lighting in your face,
And a new charm in every act and word,
While gentle innocence pervaded all!
Oh, Margaret! I love thee, and have loved
Even with a passion which no circumstance
Of time or chance can lessen. Wilt thou share
A soldier's fortunes, and a soldier's hopes?
Then shall this arm protect thee 'gainst the world.
I'll love thee, Margaret, while my eyes can drink
Thy beauty in; and even Time shall wreathe
Among thy locks of jet his silver threads,
Yet only make thee dearer to my sight.
I'll love thee, sweetest, still, still, while my heart
Pants to the drops that play within it. Ay,
Even in death, the memory of thee
Shall be a sun, whose rays shall steep in gold
The immaterial essence of my soul.
Margaret. Oh, my Bernardo, wilt thou hear me speak—
And dare I hope thou wilt not think my words
Unmaidenly?

Carpio. Speak, dearest.
Margaret. Since the hour
I first beheld thee, I have loved thee, Carpio.
If I do wrong to speak so boldly now,
Chide, but forgive me.
Carpio. I must chide thee, sweet,
For having kept so secret in thy heart
What it was mine to know.
Margaret. I loved thee ere
I knew what love was; but instruction came
Even from my passion, and my heart divined
Wherefore it throbbed when thou wast near, or when
Thy name was spoken: till at last I feared
My secret might be written in my eyes,
And I avoided thee; for when I seemed
The most reserved and cold, I loved thee best.
Carpio. Perish those doubts with that which gave them birth,—
The buried past! And yet——
Margaret. Alas! my lord,
Your brow grows sad.
Carpio. It was a sudden thought,
Whether, indeed, it were not best for thee
To let thy love fade from thy memory:
For I am bound upon a desperate strife
Of life and death to liberate my sire;
I am encompassed round with danger; ay,
A banished traitor, even while I speak:
And the result to me, of good or ill,
Is only known to One!
Margaret. Your cause, your hopes,
Your dangers, griefs, and happiness be mine:
I am content so long as Carpio loves.

[*The* KING *and Monk enter at back. Seeing* MARGARET *and* CARPIO, *they retire, listening.*

Carpio. My love is of the essence of my soul,
Which never dies. Say after me this pledge:
"In holy union to be joined to thee—"
Margaret. "In holy union to be joined to thee—"

Carpio. "Through life, till death, I do betroth myself:"
Margaret. "Through life, till death, I do betroth myself:"
Carpio. "Let God and Church complete this sacred bond!"
Margaret. "Let God and Church complete this sacred bond!"
Carpio. Our vows are registered, and Heaven approves
Be steadfast, love: fear not the king; for I
Will fashion so my schemes for your protection
That he shall fail to harm you. Let your thoughts
Be only these—I love, and am beloved.

[*Exeunt.*

The KING *and Monk come forward.*

King. 'Tis his descent—'tis the accursed blood
That flowed from father unto son—which makes
Him bitter to me.
Monk. Let my liege be calm.
King. Say, monk, am I not calm? When evil news
Like these are learned, they should be greeted thus—
With inward vows of deadliest revenge,
While all without smiles like the treacherous sea,
Ere, lashed to mountain waves, even to its depths
It opens and destroys.
Monk. It is most fit
That, being cousins, their unholy union
Should be forbid.
King. Peace! Have I not ere this
Warned thee to keep still shut up in thy heart
The fatal secret? That she *is* my child,
And the memorial of that guilty time
When my great vow of chastity I broke,
Fain would I even from myself conceal.
Monk. Her mother——
King. Oh, I loved her! She alone
Of all the world was holy in my sight.
Gentle and uncomplaining, beautiful
As angels' dreams, a flower from Paradise,
A ray of light from heaven! Even on me

She wasted the rich treasure of her love;
And I—I worshipped her! But my own oath
Had made my love bann'd and accurs'd of heaven,
And in its blight she withered and despaired!

Monk. Your penitence, your fasts, the Church's pardon——

King. My mind is racked in thinking of the past!
Henceforth I will avoid it, and be firm
To do the things I have decreed. What, ho!
Who waits without?

Monk. What means my gracious lord?

Enter a Page.

King. Desire the lady Margaret to come hither.
Stay, summon the attendance of our court,
And chiefly beg the Prince Ramiro's presence.
[*Exit Page.*
This base betrothal must be marred and broken,
Although her heart be broken with it. She
Must bend her inclination to my will,
And what I have resolved shall be to her
Fixed as the irreversible decrees
Of fate itself.

Enter MARGARET; *and, from various entrances,* RAMIRO, CARLOS, *and other Lords.*

So, Margaret, you are come.
Welcome, most royal prince; and you, my lords,
Your presence honors us. Noble Ramiro——

Ramiro. My sovereign lord.

King. We do acknowledge thee
Heir to our throne (since our strict chastity
May raise no issue of our proper blood),
And here pronounce thee, in thy father's right,
Successor to our state. In full accordance
With thy consent and wish, we do betroth thee
Unto this maid. How now, girl—dost withdraw
Thy hand?

Margaret. Forgive me, sire—and you, my lord,
Grant me your pardon also; since my hand
Is not my own, to give, or to withhold.

King. Thou speakest truth—'tis ours, by right divine—
In the same title whereby we do hold
Our regal diadem.
Margaret. I am betrothed
To Carpio.
King. The pledge is void without
Our sovereign consent. We do annul
Thy most unholy contract.
Margaret. There is still
One bond thou canst not break.
King. What is't?
Margaret. The love
That has betrothed our hearts! whose essence is
So intermingled with our souls, that each
Exists but with the other. Dear my liege,
Thus at thy feet let the poor orphan plead,
Nor let thy kingly bosom close to mercy.
I am unworthy of Ramiro's love.
My parentage a thing unknown, my heart
Pledged to another, and my dower so poor,
Save in thy bounty, it would scarce prevail
To tempt a peasant: what is in me, then,
That for my hand a noble prince should sue,
And thou, a mighty king, array thy power
'Gainst a poor girl's?
King. Wilt thou obey our will?
Margaret. I may not, without sin.
King. I would not curse thee,
For in my bosom still there is an impulse
That bids me love thee. Answer me again—
Yet pause before you answer. Wilt thou wed
This noble prince?
Margaret. Even by that sacred impulse
Which you acknowledge—by the better nature
That struggles in you——
King. Answer, wilt thou wed him?
Margaret. Never, so Heaven help me!
King. On your head
Fall the dire consequence. Most reverend father,

[*To Monk.*

We do command thee, in this girl's despite,
In wedlock to unite her to this prince.
Stand forth, Ramiro: take her by the hand.

[CARPIO *has entered with* GONSALEZ, VELASQUEZ, FERDINAND, *and* SEBASTIAN, *who remain behind.* CARPIO *now advances.*

Carpio. And if he do, by my brave father's wrongs,
I swear his head shall roll before her feet!

[MARGARET, *uttering a shriek of joy, falls into his arms.*

King. Wrest them asunder.
Margaret. I am thine, Bernardo:
Let them not take me from thee.
Carpio. King, beware—
For I am desperate! This maid is mine—
By solemn vow betrothed my future wife;
And not on me shalt thou repeat the fraud
Was practised on my father, while my arms
Are free to fight for that which is my own.
King. Yield up that traitress—yield her up, I say.
She is our lawful subject, and we claim
The right to her disposal.
Carpio. Look upon her!
(Cling to me, Margaret—thou'rt safe, my girl.)
Dost thou not note the paleness of her cheek—
The terror in her eye—the mute appeal
For mercy written on her brow? Alfonso,
If thou art man, forbear.
King. 'Tis not in prayers
To shake me in my purpose.
Carpio. Is it not?
Neither will threats shake mine. I here proclaim
Open rebellion to thy throne and state!
King. Seize on the traitor.
Carpio. Back, I say—who'll dare
To interpose between my course and me?

[*Supporting* MARGARET, *he moves backwards towards flat, defending himself with his sword:* GONSALEZ, VELASQUEZ, FERDINAND, SEBASTIAN, &c., *shielding him on either side. A number of Soldiers also enter, and take his part.*

Smile, smile, my girl. Off, off, ye servile lords!
Why should we stain our weapons in your blood?
Ye cannot bar me.

[*He attains the pathway, where he stands in a defensive attitude, supported by his partisans, as the curtain falls.*

END OF ACT THE SECOND.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Camp of* Carpio. *Oviedo in the distance.*

Enter Gonsalez *and* Garcias.

Gonsalez. Heed not their jests.
Garcias. I prithee, Gonsalez,
Answer me this.
Gonsalez. Speak on.
Garcias. Did they not all
Fight their first battle ere they fought the second?
Gonsalez. Most sapiently demanded. True, O Garcias!
Garcias. It follows, then, that every man of them
Must recollect a time when he, like me,
Had never fought at all.
Gonsalez. An oracle
Speaks through thee, noble Garcias.
Garcias. By Saint Jago,
The braggarts are too forward! One would think
They were staunch warriors, had slain their thousands,
Scattered great armies, taken and sacked towns,
Ere yet their mothers weaned them.
Gonsalez. All proceeds
From envy, Garcias.
Garcias. Wherefore should they envy?
'Tis doubtless true that all mankind have faults,
And I have mine: but vanity is *not*
One of my foibles. Therefore may you speak
Freely of my perfections. Tell me, then,
What see they in me that excites their envy?
Gonsalez. Stretch forth thine arm. Note how the muscles swell
Beneath thy ample sleeve, which rises o'er them
As the good ship upheaves along the waves.

Now clench thy hand. How mighty is that grasp!
Arm, wrist, and hand, how fit to wield a mace!
Throw thy head back, and draw a bounteous breath:
A fuller still. Behold that swelling chest:
Like a broad shield of triple steel, it bids
Defiance to man's weapons. Let me gaze
Upon thy form.

Garcias. Thou dost not mock me, Gonsalez?

Gonsalez. I might as safely mock the Afric lion!
Plant firm thy foot. Now, looking at thee thus,
From crown to toe, and taking in the prospect
With both mine eyes, thou art, to my poor judgment,
The most sublime, magnificent of—peacocks!

Enter VELASQUEZ, FERDINAND, SEBASTIAN, *and others.*

Velasquez. We march at midnight. Garcias, I am sent
To ask of thee a favour.

Gonsalez. To command
The charge against the walls—a dangerous post,
Well fitted for so brave a man.

Velasquez. 'Tis known
How often you have prayed to be confronted,
Your single self, against an hundred Moors.

Garcias. Nay, not so many—fifty, good Velasquez,
If I remember right—or five-and-twenty.

Ferdinand. Oh, for a dozen like thee!

Gonsalez. By the mass!
'Tis thou alone shalt lead us in the battle.

Garcias. Nay, put me in the centre of the ranks
Where I may supervise the enemy
At reasonable distance; for my sight
Is piercing as the eagle's, and takes in
The smallest thing at the remotest point,
Whereby I could discern where danger is—
A most important gift! My proper place
Is in the centre.

Ferdinand. Or a mile behind.

Velasquez. You all are wrong—another duty calls him.
Garcias will not be present at the fight.

Gonsalez. You kill him but to say so.

Garcias. Gentlemen,
It is a soldier's duty to obey.
For fifteen years my soul has been a warrior's,
Although my body still remained at home.
Since I could bear inaction for so long,
I'll strive to bear it now, assisting you
With my good wishes and my prayers.
Velasquez. To-night,
'Twill be your honorable task to guide
The lady Margaret to a place of safety.
Garcias. Then I presume, my lord, my special charge
Is to protect the lady?
Velasquez. Ay——
Gonsalez. From dulness.
Garcias. I thank you, good my lord. And if I fail
To do that duty honestly and bravely,
Think me no soldier.

[*Exit* GARCIAS.

Ferdinand. What a moth is this!
Gonsalez. A moth! You wrong the pretty little insect.
Examine well the attributes of each,
And say, in what yon thing of scent and froth
Bears any likeness to that gallant fly.
Its transient life comprises one grand act
Of valour and devotion. What it loves,
That will it die for. Its dear idol is
The glowing flame, round whose devouring peak
Swims joyously the fragile votary.
In circles ever narrowing, round it whirls,
Scorched by the light it worships; till at last,
To make complete the proof of its devotion,
It leaps triumphant to the flame's embrace.
Then, like the fair Greek Semele, who saw
Her lover clothed in his Olympian brightness,
And in that sight expired content, even so
The moth now falls, slain by the god it loved!

[*A trumpet.*

What trumpet 's that?
Velasquez. The preconcerted note
Which warns us to make ready.

Ferdinand. Carpio comes.

Enter CARPIO, *from Tent.*

Carpio. One moment, friends, ere you collect your troops.
You are apprized how desperate is our hope;
Not in the sense of an inferior force,
For both in numbers and in warlike skill
The 'vantage lies with us; but in the fact
That all our efforts may be made abortive
At the mere signal of our royal foe,
If he should doom my noble sire to death.
Gonsalez. 'Tis true; but should he act so foul a part,
What will avail him 'gainst our just revenge?
Carpio. Poor, poor equivalent for Saldane's life!
Let us not name revenge while hope is left.
Revenge is built upon the loss of hope,
But hope is the first basis of success.
Velasquez. What would my lord propose?
Carpio. A scheme designed
To cut communication off between
My father's prison and Alfonso's power:
A scheme of glorious promise, but great danger;
And he who joins me in it first must bid
Adieu to life, as to a much-loved friend
Whom he *may* see again, but fears he will not.
Velasquez. How many men requires your enterprise?
Carpio. Less than two hundred scarcely will avail,
Although with twenty I will dare the peril.
Velasquez. I claim the privilege to join you in it.
Gonsalez. And I!
Omnes. And I!
Carpio. I knew your hearts, brave friends.
Gonsalez. Leave it to us, my lord, to organize
The force we need to aid us. In an hour
We will enlist the number you require,
Made up of hearts as callous to all danger
As the good swords they carry.
Carpio. I accept
Your proffer in all confidence and frankness.

And now, for one short hour, farewell. Your duty
Demands your presence elsewhere. When again
We meet, I will at large detail the scheme
In which I seek your aid; and till that time,
My love and grateful thanks be with you all.

Velasquez. Adieu till then, my lord.

[*Exeunt all but* CARPIO.

Carpio. Who says that men
Are all self-seekers? O, unwisely wise,
Ye cold philosophers! whose visions scan
The deeds of others with imperfect light,
And a perverted judgment: ye who see
The outer surface only of men's lives,
But never penetrate the hearts of men—
Humble yourselves; and from these gallant souls,
Pledged to encounter almost certain death
To save an old man's sapped and withered life,
Without a prospect of the slightest good
That can be realized unto themselves—
From them learn higher wisdom—give to acts
Of heroism and self-sacrifice
A nobler name—and call them not ambition!
No—let misguided theorists assert
Whate'er they may, one portion of my heart
I will reserve for the endearing thought
That man, with all his blemishes, retains
One attribute which even gods may prize!

MARGARET *enters from Tent.* CARPIO *meets and caresses her.*

Carpio. There is a tear upon my Margaret's cheek:
A smile is on her lip, but not the smile
I love to see there, though it well becomes her.
It is a smile wherein I read sad thoughts,
Such as I would not she should brood upon.
What, not a word! Thy husband claims the right
To learn thy secret griefs—the privilege
To vanquish or to share them.

Margaret. Dost thou ask

Why I am sad? Is 't not enough I love thee—
And are not these, perchance, the last few moments
When my fond eyes may lift their gaze to thine?
And can it be we ne'er may meet again?
My heart will break when I lose sight of thee.
Carpio. By Heaven! thou weepest, Margaret. Sit here,
While at thy feet thy lover gently chides thee.
Now let me see thee smile. That's my brave wench!
Wilt thou make answer to my questions, sweet?
Margaret. Ay, my dear lord.
Carpio. Say, Margaret, dost thou love me?
Margaret. The Power that reads all hearts doth know how fondly.
Carpio. If I were poor, and by the world despised,
Wouldst thou still cherish me?
Margaret. If thou wert poor
My love should be the richer: if despised,
What should thy wife do but esteem thee more?
Carpio. But if I did, or failed to do, an act
For which all nature would aloud proclaim
That I had struck my name from off the roll
Of honorable men, and damned myself
To everlasting fame—wouldst love me then?
Margaret. I would.
Carpio [*with surprise*]. How say you?
Margaret. I would love you still.
Carpio. Margaret! [*They rise.*]
Margaret. My lord, 'tis possible to love
Without esteem.
Carpio. But could'st *thou*, Margaret, love,
Yet not respect me?
Margaret. True love, once bestowed,
Can undergo no change, except increase.
I see the drift of your strange questions now.
This would you say:—"My father now is yours—
My honor yours: shall I desert the one—
Shall I degrade the other?"
Carpio. What thy answer?
Margaret. I love thee, but I love thy honor more.
Go forth, brave knight, and in the fiercest strife,

When sullen Danger stands athwart thy path,
And like a bride thou dost encounter her,
Disdaining the black venom of her kiss—
If o'er thy mind, at such a moment, cross
A thought of me, let it be only this—
"So would she have me act!"
Carpio. My bravest wife!
I'll fight the better when I think of thee.
Go not, my love. 'Tis Garcias.

Enter GARCIAS.

Dost thou seek me?
Garcias. My lord, a stranger craves to speak with you.
Carpio. What is he?
Garcias. Judging by his voice, a man;
Also a man, to judge him by his gait:
But for these signs, my lord, I should have thought
He was a piece of animated cloth.
Carpio. Why so?
Garcias. Because nought else is seen of him.
From head to foot he is enveloped in
A mighty mantle. "I would speak with Carpio,"
Exclaimed this figure. "Who art thou?" I asked.
"Thou art not he," the solemn voice rejoined;
"Only to Carpio will I speak."
Carpio. Conduct
The stranger hither.
Garcias. He is here already.

Enter the KING, *his face and figure concealed by a cloak: also enter, from different directions,* VELASQUEZ, GONSALEZ, SEBASTIAN, FERDINAND, *and others.*

Carpio. Who are you, sir? If no momentous cause
Precludes the favour, I would beg to see
Your features ere you speak.
[*The* KING *discovers himself.*
The king!
King. Even so.
Carpio. You will not wonder, sire, at my surprise—
Your presence here—so soon—was unexpected.

To what strange circumstance shall I ascribe it?
King. It is not strange that I should love my country:
It is not strange that I should sacrifice
My wishes for her good: it is not strange,
With such an end in view, that I should place
In jeopardy my life and liberty,
Which I have done this day in coming here,
Unarmed and unprotected.
Carpio. Still I fail
To understand you, sire.
King. Then look around.
See yonder plain, thick peopled with my subjects—
My subjects still, though tempted to rebellion;
In Oviedo are ten thousand more:
A few short hours hence, each to each opposed
In fratricidal strife, our rivers' beds
Would change their streams to blood—the blood of Spaniards.
Rather than that, perish each wish of mine!
Rather than that, let even Saldane 'scape
The doom his crime deserves!
Carpio. The criminal
Is not Saldana, sire: your majesty
Has better earned the title.
King. Let that pass—
And answer me. What end do you propose
To gain by this rebellion?
Carpio. To release
The noble Saldane.
King. Nothing *more* than that?
Carpio. A dire revenge on thee, if we should fail.
King. Say, rather, on my country! Hear me, then.
I am prepared to give your father up
Without the shedding of one drop of blood.
Carpio. Without condition, also?
King. Only such
As the security of Spain demands.
You must forthwith disband your rebel army,
And yield your fortress into my possession.
Carpio. Yield up my castle, and disband my army!

My castle is the stronghold of my power—
And well thou know'st it, king—possessing which,
In my most adverse fortune I might still
Safely defy thee. Must I give up all?
Well, be it so. Give me my father only,
And for the rest, even as thou wilt, so be it.

King. Thy covenant must be the first performed:
When that is done, I will surrender Saldane.

Carpio. Not before then? I fear your majesty
May have forgotten one important point
Which I must claim to have considered.

King. Name it.

Carpio. That when I have relinquished all you ask
I shall be powerless, and your majesty
May deem your own performance of the contract
Beneath your royal dignity. What pledge
Have I from you?

King. The honor of a king:
My sacred oath to give your father up,
For ever freed and parted from my power.

Carpio. No more than that?

King. Now, by the saints above,
Thou angerest me! Vain and presumptuous boy!
Ere thou wast cradled I had won a name,
Which since I have preserved, whose dignity
Even my direst foes have ne'er assailed.
I look around me now, and see the scowls
Of some I long have deemed my enemies,
Now proved to be so. Even unto them
I send my challenge, and of them I ask
Whether my word, once pledged, was ever broken?
But I disdain to parley on this theme.
Thou'st heard my offer: take it, if thou wilt,
Or if thou wilt, reject it. What, no answer?
I wait no more—so be it. Fare you well! [*Going.*

Carpio. Stay, sire. Your majesty forgets the danger
Of passing through my camp without an escort.

King. I freely came; can I not free return?

Carpio. I warned, not threatened you. Have you
withdrawn

Your offer, King? or is it subject still
To my acceptance?
King. Be it as you will.
Carpio. Will, then, my liege deign for a little time
To rest within my tent, the while I take
The counsel of my friends?
King. Here I remain,
But will excuse your absence.
Carpio. We shall strive
Not to o'ertask your royal patience, sire.

[*Exeunt into Tent all but the* KING *and* MARGARET.

King [*aside*]. 'Tis not a fraud—or if a fraud, no crime.
Shall I repent me ere I act the part
I have resolved upon? Down, monstrous thought!
My course is fixed as the diurnal laws,
And man and fiend alike shall fail to move me.

[MARGARET *has timidly advanced towards the* KING: *she now kneels, and catches his robe: he turns and sees her.*

Away! I know thee not.
Margaret. Oh, hear me!
King. Hence!
Go, join thy chosen lord, thou lovely traitress,
And counsel him how to o'erreach his king.
Margaret. Sire, I have ever loved thee, though I stand
In your displeasure now. The visions which
My earliest remembrances can trace
Present no image clearer or more loved
Than thine, when to my convent home in France
Thou camest, casting off thy regal state,
Thy majesty concealed, and, with fond words,
Yet written on my heart, thou didst avouch
That thou wouldst ever love me as thy child,
Though child of thine I was not, for the sake
Of the dear mother I had never known.
King [*aside*]. Be steel, my heart, be steel. Back, memory, back.
Margaret. When I received a home within your palace,

I for the first time learned your royal state.
I dreaded, then, that your superior rank
Would bar your heart's affection: but, dear liege,
You did dispel that doubt, and, with a kiss,
Spoke of my mother once again, and vowed
That for her sake you'd love me evermore.

King. The love I promised, you have forfeited.

Margaret. Oh, can it be that I have lost for aye
The love that one time was my dearest wealth?
If I have carelessly mislaid a ring,
Or lost a jewel, 'tis but lost to me:
The jewel, or the ring, hath still existence.
Is love so different, that it can *be*,
And after, *cease* to be? Have you transferred
The love that once was mine unto another?
If not, your love can only be obscured
By anger, as the clouds obscure the sun,
That glows, *beyond*, still radiant as before.
Oh, for some kindly wind that would again
Disclose the love that now is all o'ercast.

King. Margaret, it may be even as thou say'st:
Nay, more, I feel it is so. Come to me.
Twine thy soft arms around my neck. Now look
With love, as thou wast wont, into my eyes.
Wouldst thou dispel my anger?

Margaret. Say but how.

King. Renounce thy rebel husband, and return
With me.

Margaret. Ah, never!

King. Pause, before the sun
Of my affection sinks and sets for ever.

Margaret. Oh, sire, it cannot, cannot, cannot be!

King. Even as with force I do unwind your arms
That cling about my neck; so, with like force,
I do unwind each loving thought of thee
That clings about my heart—and all together
I cast off—thus!

[MARGARET *sinks to the ground despairingly.*

Behold—your husband comes.

Re-enter CARPIO *and his friends.*

Carpio. We have deliberated on your offer.
Now hear me, sire. Your vantage ground is this—
My father is your hostage. What if we,
Having the means, were to detain you here,
And treat you as a pledge for Saldane's safety ?

King. Your name would sink to future generations
As the great synonym of perfidy.

Carpio. I think not that. Your majesty knew well
The danger you encountered coming here.
If my foe place within my hand a sword,
Shall I not use it for my own defence ?

King. I knew my danger, true ; but deemed it slight,
Thinking some honor lived in Carpio's breast.

Carpio. You thought aright. I would not wrong you now
To make the world my empire. Sire, do thou
The like with me. I do accept thy offer.
If thou prove true, then all is well for thee.
If thou prove false, be sure, my liege, of this—
I'll have revenge. My castle I give up—
But that is nothing—let it go. By Heaven !
It pleases me the more to meet a foe
Upon the open plain, spear against spear,
Sword against sword, and honest breast to breast,
Than to be cooped and starved within a space
Closed in by granite walls.

King. Mark well my oath.
Your pledge performed, I will give up to you
Your father, freed for ever from my power.
This cross I kiss—the solemn oath is sworn !

Margaret [*who has advanced between the* KING *and* CARPIO]. Sire, let me join your hands in amity.

King [*disregarding her*]. Say, Carpio, am I free to leave your camp ?

Carpio. Arise, my love. Velasquez, Ferdinand—
I pray you see the king depart in safety.

[*Scene closes in.*

SCENE II.—*Another part of the Camp.*

Enter GONSALEZ *and* GARCIAS.

Garcias. No fighting, after all.
Gonsalez. Is it not sad!
I warrant thou wilt go to bed and weep.
Garcias. I do begin to know when thou art serious,
And when thou mock'st me. But for all thy jests,
This will I say. If any dozen men
Had ventured to attack me while in charge
Of the fair lady Margaret, by Heaven!
I should have shown——
Gonsalez. The swiftness of thy steed.
Garcias. You will not hear me. This I would have said.
If such a thing had chanced, I would have shown
The recreant knaves that, if I could not fight
As well as they, I could lay down my life,
And willingly, in the defence of beauty.
Gonsalez. Give me thy hand. I cannot choose but jest
When 'tis my humour: pardon me for that.
But for your honor, and your constancy,
And in its kind, your bravery as well,
I will maintain your worth 'gainst any man.
Now hear the charge that I will lay on you,
In very confidence of your desert.
First, tell me what you think of this most kind
Concession which the king has made to Carpio.
Garcias. I do believe his undertaking honest.
Gonsalez. And I believe it to be false as hell—
In contradiction to his previous acts—
His oaths—and more than all, his character.
Some hold the same belief, and some reject it:
In either case, precaution will be wise.
Garcias. No man believes in caution more than I.
Gonsalez. Part of the contract on Bernardo's side
Is that he shall forthwith disband his army.
Presume this done, and his fair castle yielded,
What would protect him 'gainst the king, in case
His majesty proved treacherous?

Garcias. Why, nothing.
He might, at will, confine both sire and son
In the same cell, chained neck and neck together.
Gonsalez. Therefore the army must not be dispersed.
See you the officers, and say, from me,
That when the soldiers come to them for pay
They hold back half their dues, with the intent
To keep them still together. They must seem
To scatter; but let not a man of them
Be distant two hours marching from the camp.
Let not a word of this be known to Carpio,
Whose honour is so strict in the observance
Of what he pledges that he would o'erthrow
All our endeavours.
Garcias. If I carry out
These your instructions with all due success,
And wise discretion, will you promise then
To jest no more at my expense?
Gonsalez. I do—
With this condition—that I be not tempted.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Outside Oviedo, before the Castle. A Moat, and practicable Drawbridge, which is lowered as the Scene opens.*

Trumpet. Enter CARPIO, GONSALEZ, FERDINAND, VELASQUEZ, GARCIAS, *and* SEBASTIAN. *Also, a few Officers and Soldiers, who remain at back. As* CARPIO *and his friends come forward, the* KING *enters from Castle over the Drawbridge.*

King. Welcome, Bernardo. I am here to keep
My promise, and to give your father up.
Carpio [*kneeling*]. Sire, I have trusted you. Henceforward deem
Bernardo's heart the truest in your realm.

King. Rise—I accept the loyal offering.
Lords, ye have doubted me. You deemed your king
So false to honor, to himself, his country,
And to the Holy Creed he holds most sacred,
That he would break his pledge. Yourselves shall judge
If you have wronged me.
Carpio. Let me pray you, sire,
To pardon them.
King. Give me your hand, Bernardo.
You must not hope to see him as he was.
Sorrow and years have silvered o'er his hair,
And furrowed his broad brow. Have I your word,
When I have given up your father to you,
Even as he is, you will be faithful to me?
Carpio. You have, my liege.
King. Look that you keep your pledge
As I keep mine. Within there, ho! bring forth
The noble Count Saldana.

[*Solemn music: a procession of Soldiers and Priests enters from Castle over the Drawbridge.*

Carpio. Shall I see
My father? Be thou still, my panting heart.
Velasquez, I am almost sick with joy.
Ferdinand. What means this pageantry?
Gonsalez. Some mockery—
Some jugglery is here.
Carpio. He will not dare
Deceive me now—the terror of my name—
He dare not trifle with it. Hence with doubt!
Have I not bled for this? Have I not fought,
And rushed on grisly death a thousand times,
To earn this blissful moment? Have I not
Foreseen this happiness in dreams? And now
You bid me doubt. Away!

[*The body of* SALDANA *is borne in upon a bier.*

King. Behold your father.
Carpio [*aghast, and almost speechless*]. My father, king?
I do not see him. Where?
That corpse is not my father.

King. All of him
That now remains is there.
Carpio. Oh, villain, villain!

[*Turns slowly and distractedly to the body.*

It is thy son that gazes on thee, father:
Why dost not answer me? Alfonso—king—
Where is my father?
King. I've redeemed my pledge—
I've kept my oath—"to give him up to thee
For ever freed and parted from my power."
Thou hast no further claim—yonder's thy father.
Carpio. Thou liest! A father would embrace his son.
Can this corpse do the office of a father?
Where is the smile I looked for? Where the grasp
Of fatherly affection? Where the look
Of gladness which I hoped would meet my own?
Where the fond glances of paternal love?
The *living* hand I thought to kiss? the heart
That should have panted unto mine? The father
For whom I fought is not this lifeless clay.
Didst thou not swear, O king, to give him to me?
Where is he, then? Canst make the gushing life
Re-animate this senseless form? canst snatch
The spark Prometheus stole? Until thou canst,
Even to thy teeth I'll tell thee, perjured king,
Thou liest!
King. Beware!
Carpio. Of *thee?* What canst thou do
More than thou'st done already? Once I feared thee—
For thou'dst a hostage then whose life I valued
At twenty times my own. Beware of thee?
Like a poor idiot thou hast robbed thyself
Of what alone I dreaded; thou dost act
The common madman now, and thy vain fury
Is the wild raving of disordered fancy.
Beware of thee? Talk terror to the herd
That heed thy threats; but I am he, Alfonso,
Will teach *thee* to beware.

King. Thy blood runs foul—
Foul even as thy father's—traitors both.
Carpio. And thou the worst of traitors—unto Heaven!
Father, dear father, couldst thou see me now—
Couldst thou but know I still remembered thee—
Couldst thou but hear my voice—couldst thou but speak
One blessing to thy son—I should be happy.
But now, oh, now! my heart is desolate—
The world, with all its glories and its hopes,
Has shrunk from me, and on the barren void
Alone I stand! I live for nothing now!

[*Throws himself on the body of* SALDANA.

Gonsalez (*to* KING). Monarch, this crime that is upon thy soul
Will damn thee to perdition. Banish hope—
Live in dismay—and perish in despair.
King. Away! 'Tis Heaven's revenge, not mine.
Gonsalez [*to* CARPIO]. Arise—
Arise, Bernardo, and confront the king.
Thou still hast friends devoted to thy cause.
Velasquez. For me, I cast aside all weak regard
Unto the thing called loyalty. To 'venge
This most unholy wrong I dedicate
My future life.
Carpio. Peace, peace—the dead is here.
Let silence sit upon the stirless air;
Let all be hushed as death itself, and render
Homage to death; let the whole universe
Hang motionless in space, until the dust
Of centuries has gathered o'er the stars,
And shrouded them in gloom. Father, my father,
We're parted now, never to meet on earth.
For thee I live. I'll pray for thee, my father.
Farewell, farewell!

[*Kisses the body, then starts up.*

Make way there—way for Carpio!
King. Let him not pass.
Carpio. False, perjured hound! I tell thee
Thou hast not heard the last of Saldane yet.

If to our vows the dead are sensible,
Hear me, the shade of him so foully murdered,
Oh, hear thy son! May infamy pursue
My name on earth; distraction, madness seize me;
And the distemper of my mind create
A myriad hideous phantasies, from which
My soul in her debasement shall shrink back
With most ignoble fear; and may I be
Debarred from hope of meeting thee in Heaven;
And feel and know, when tossed among the fiends
In the fierce fires of Hell, thou scornest me:
If I avenge not, on the present spur
Of this deep oath, thine and Ximena's wrongs!

King. Arrest the traitor!

Carpio. Traitor! Deem me such
Henceforth to thee. My standard shall go forth,
And all my Leonites will flock around it.
Our cry shall be—"Saldana and Revenge!"
Make way I say.

King. Slaves, do my bidding—seize him.

[*Soldiers advance on* CARPIO: *they are met by* GONSALEZ, *&c.*

Carpio. Let him that longs for death molest me now.
Back, back, I say! King, we shall meet again.

[*Rushes out.*

END OF ACT THE THIRD.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Oviedo Castle: on the Battlements: Night.*

RODRIGO *on guard.*

Rodrigo. Hold! who goes there?
Garcias. A friend.
Rodrigo. The password?
Garcias. "Fortune."

Enter GARCIAS.

Rodrigo. Pass on.
Garcias. What's stirring? Is there any news?
Rodrigo. Nothing, my lord.
Garcias. I'll in, and take some rest.
'Tis possible that some despatches may
Come from del Carpio in the night: be sure
You send them to me on the instant. Ho!
Without there—stand!
Gonsalez [*entering*]. "Fortune."
Garcias. What, Gonsalez!
Gonsalez. The same—minus an arm.
Garcias. Why, what has happened?
Gonsalez. Nothing of consequence, my doughty friend.
We've had another battle—that is all.
Garcias. And lost it?
Gonsalez. Which? The battle, or my arm?
I've lost my arm, or nearly so. Some novice
Cut me below the shoulder, when the fool
Should have cut off my head. I took off his
By way of teaching him. Men never learn
So well as by experience.
Garcias. Pshaw! let's speak
About the battle.

Gonsalez. In good time, my friend,
We're speaking of my arm. Well, as you see,
I've tied it up: perchance 'twill heal again.
Garcias. Where fought you?
Gonsalez. Marry, where the foe fought too.
Where *should* we fight? I'll tell thee all about it.
Thou know'st, when we laid siege to Oviedo—
Garcias. Yes, yes.
Gonsalez. For upwards of a month we lay
Outside the city; and, good faith! we found
Much to impede us in our great desire
To take possession of it. Thou know'st, too,
Partly by stratagem, partly by force,
We gained our end so far. All this thou knowest.
Garcias. Then wherefore dost thou tell it me again?
What of this battle that you speak of?
Gonsalez. Why,
'Twas a tough fight, that's all. Garcias, thou art
A man of valour. I'll not flatter thee—
But thou'rt a man of valour, and (which more
Fits with my purpose) one of sound discretion,
Of trust approved, and my good friend; and therefore
I've something for thine ear. I've ridden hard
Full thirty miles, o'er steep and rugged rocks,
Hoping to see thee; in the night-time, too—
Without the help even of the churlish moon.
My horse is weary, Garcias.
Garcias. Was it this
You came to tell me?
Gonsalez. Would you have me speak
Before yon listener?
Garcias. I forgot him quite.
Rodrigo, I relieve you of your guard.
Gonsalez. You'll find my horse standing before the gate:
I pray you, tend him carefully, and for
Your pains, take this [*Gives money*].
[*Exit* RODRIGO.
Garcias. And now we are alone,

Say, have we won or lost?

Gonsalez. Now, by the mass!
This game of severing heads, and legs, and arms,
And cutting throats, and stabbing where we can,
And being hacked at, maimed—it may be, killed—
Is no light sport. But worse than all the rest!
After this toil, to take with speed to horse,
And gallop through the kingdom in the night
At risk of neck-breaking; and to be pestered
With—"What's the news; expound—relate—detail!"

Garcias. Blame but yourself, who will not answer straight
To a plain question asked thee.

Gonsalez. By the saints!
I think 'tis time for bed. [*Going.*

Garcias. A single word—
Since on this battle all our fortunes rest,
Say, rank we with the victors or the vanquished?

Gonsalez. Did Carpio ever fail? The victors, man!
From noontide till the sun did set in blood
We chased the royalists, and heaps of slain
For miles along mark out which way they fled.

Garcias. The king——

Gonsalez. The king's our prisoner.

Garcias. I would give
This hand to have been present at the fight.

Gonsalez. 'Twas a hard battle, Garcias, and you lost
A world of honor being absent from it.

Garcias. I'll make amends hereafter.

Gonsalez. In the council?
Not in the field.

Garcias. Nay, do not scoff at me.
My voice shall be the loudest——

Gonsalez. Oh, my friend,
It ever has been!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A Room in the Palace.*

Enter CARPIO *and* VELASQUEZ.

Carpio. That which the king has been, I, too, will be.
His acts shall be my standards. Void of mercy,
Vengeful, relentless, deadly cold in heart,
As he was to the father, so the son
Shall be to him.

Velasquez. His faults you should not copy.

Carpio. I'll copy faults and all: let him impeach
Himself that taught the lesson, not the learner.
Say, how have you disposed him? Is he placed
Within Saldana's dungeon?

Velasquez. Ay, my lord.
Carlos is with him.

Carpio. I'll not have it so.
He must be all alone, that he may learn
From his own anguish all my father suffered.
I'll have him lie there, rotting in the damp,
Half stifled by the subterranean air,
His ear unsolaced by a human voice,
His eye uncheered by sight of human form,
For tedious days on days, and nights on nights,
Protracted into years.

Velasquez. He will not see them.

Carpio. Can he not drag out a few years? My friend,
You are deceived. Within that very dungeon
My father lay, while round the earth his course
Sped five and twenty times the genial sun,
Which brought, alas! no light or warmth for him.
The victim suffered—shall the tyrant 'scape?
Well, be it so. When he is *dead*, Velasquez,
I shall forgive him—never before then!

Enter SEBASTIAN.

Sebastian. The queen, my lord.

Carpio. Anon, anon, Sebastian.
Leave me, Velasquez.

[*Exeunt* SEBASTIAN *and* VELASQUEZ.
Be thou still, my heart!

And overrule not my stern mind's resolve ;
Or rather, let me be all head, no heart.

Enter the QUEEN.

In reverence, in humbleness, in sorrow,
I pay due homage to my queen.
Queen. Perform
Your duty to the king.
Carpio. It is performed ;
What he has merited is rendered him.
Queen. A dungeon, sir, is not a sovereign's place ;
Treason, my lord, is not a subject's duty.
Carpio. Have kings no duty to their subjects ? Madam,
The king has forfeited his regal rights.
For him I have no pity : but for you,
For you, dear madam, ever good and kind,
My heart is bleeding.
Queen. Then for my sake only
Grant to my lord your pardon.
Carpio. Saldane lies
In the cold earth, and from the spirit land
His ghost flies nightly, clamouring for revenge.
Queen. What wilt thou do ? Thou wilt not kill the king ?
Carpio. I cannot answer.
Queen. Speak the honest truth,
And say, you dare not.
Carpio. Dare not, lady ?
Queen. Ay.
If in your mind a thought so horrible
As murder of your king has found a place,
Both thought and execution of the crime
You would conceal from every human ken,
But most of all from mine.
Carpio. Is't so with kings
Who murder loyal subjects ?
Queen. If you knew
That which I know—if I but dared to tell—
You would as soon slay her whom most you love
As touch Alfonso's life.

Carpio. What dost thou mean ?
Queen. Oh, ask me not ?
Carpio. Speak you of Margaret ?
Queen. I may not answer.
Carpio. Even as you will—
I seek no confidence. But if there be
Within your knowledge and to me unknown
A cause why mercy should be shown Alfonso,
'Twere wise to tell it.
Queen. 'Tis my husband's secret—
Once, when he had a fever, he disclosed it:
I never spake of it, and at this hour
He dreams not that 'tis known to me.
Carpio. *His* secret—
And Margaret's secret too ?
Queen. She knows it not.
But question me no further. Ah ! my lord, [*Kneeling.*
If it can move you, as it ought, to see
Your queen, thus lowly, suing for your grace,
Then let the sight bring to your heart remorse.
Carpio. I must not see this—rise—you seek in vain
To move me thus.
Queen. Bear witness, gracious Heaven,
To this which now upon my bended knees
I swear is sacred truth ! If this vain man
Madly usurp thy function of revenge,
And murder his anointed king, the crime
Shall back recoil upon himself. His peace
Shall be for ever wrecked, here and hereafter ;
And the same stroke which kills the man he hates
Shall slay as well her he has sworn to love !
Carpio. Thy meaning, woman ? What can be the bond
'Twixt Margaret and the king, that one dire stroke
Must slay them both ?
Queen. Beware of what you ask ?
Carpio. Dost thou believe in dreams ? Methought, last night,
That I had slain the king, and offered up
His body to appease Saldana's ghost.
I said within myself—" What I have done

Is just and right: " and to my conscience spake,
" Rest thou in peace—no stain is on my soul!"
Queen. No stain!
Carpio. Then voices murmured in my ear—
" *Whom* hast thou murdered? Dost thou know, dull man?"
I answered,—" The assassin of my father."
Queen. Great Heaven, protect the king, and spare this man!
Carpio. Scarce had I spoken thus, when, piercing through
My ears, my brain, my heart, my heart of hearts,
There rushed an agonizing shriek. I knew
'Twas Margaret; and with the sudden shock
The blood within my veins seemed to congeal,
And I was dead to all sensation, save
The power to hear, and terror of my thoughts.
Again the shriek resounded in my ears;
Again the voices cried—" Whom hast thou murdered?"
I could not speak. Then moaned the creaking wind—
" Weep, ever weep; for thou hast slain her sire!"
Queen. Thy dream warned truly — Margaret is his daughter.
Wilt thou have mercy now?
Carpio. If thou'rt my friend,
Relieve me from distraction.
Queen. How, my lord?
Carpio. Point out a course to satisfy my honor
That shall not outrage my affections; blend
Water with fire, that both shall be as one,
Neither extinct; make the impossible
A trifle to perform. Or, if thou canst not—
Rail at the king, and curse him—justify
The things which are forbid,—and consecrate
Rebellion and foul murder!
Queen. Let me rather
Teach thee how great are mercy and forgiveness,
How impious is revenge.
Carpio. A fitting creed
For those who, never having suffered wrong,
Have nothing to revenge. I was bequeathed

By my dead sire a legacy of hate.
Shall I resign the dread inheritance
Because my heart is weak enough to love ?
Oh ! that I had been born some abject worm,
To crawl my brief space of ignoble life
In the dank slime ; and then, poor conscious wretch,
Unnoticed, my existence trodden out,
And cancelled by a peasant's foot. Ha ! see—
Yonder she comes. Her eyes encounter mine.
Enter MARGARET.
Like the poor bird charmed by the snake I stand
Powerless to stir. Away, away, away !
Margaret. My dearest love——
Carpio. Take hence those eyes of thine—
They torture me—they burn into my heart,
And wither it !
Margaret. What ails my lord ?
Carpio. I know thee—
I know thee well—thou art a monarch's daughter.
Thy beauty ruined thee ; for thou wast happy
Until the fiend who mocked me all my life
With a delusive hope, seeing thy face—
So exquisitely fair that it might tempt
An angel to his fall—possessed thy mind,
And changed thee to a demon ! Ay, I know thee.
Margaret. Alas ! what have I done ?
Carpio. Let not thine eyes
Behold the light of day, but pluck them from
The settings where they shine—there's evil in them :
For they have tempted me, and still they tempt
My wavering purpose. Clip those raven locks,
To me more fatal than would be the snakes
That clustered round Medusa's head. Enshroud
The beauties of thy neck, grow foul and haggard,
Lest that the devil make thee tempt men still.
Thy hands make hard—then lift them up to Heaven,
And pray to be forgiven !
Margaret. Dearest lord,
What is my crime ? Look not upon me thus.
Alas ! what is't distresses thee ?

Carpio. Dost weep?
Oh, let the clouds rain all their fountains dry,
And the blue arch of heaven be parched and sere,
Ere thou dost lose one crystal drop for me!
Ah me, unkind! Come to my breast, my own.
What have I said to thee—what done? My mind
Is racked with sorrows—even holy things
To me look foul as night.

Margaret. Tell me thy griefs.

Carpio. Gaze in my eyes, and let me read thy soul.

Margaret. Thou canst read nothing there save love for thee.

Carpio. Wouldst thou desert thy husband for thy sire?

Margaret. What means my lord?

Carpio. Wouldst thou desert me?—speak.

Margaret. Desert *me*, Heaven, in the hour I do!

Carpio. Oh, Margaret, thy love is torture to me.
Thy father, Margaret—I choke to speak it—
Thy father 'twas that doomed my sire to death.

Margaret. The king!

Carpio. Ay, he, the king—the chaste Alfonso!

Margaret. The king my father?

Queen. It is even so.

Carpio. Would that it were not so—or being so,
Would for thy dear sake we had never loved!

Margaret. For my sake, Carpio?

Carpio. Better 'twere for all,
But best for thee. The obdurate, cold grave
Could never so divide us as henceforth
We must be severed.

Margaret. 'Tis some horrid dream—
Only a dream—when, when shall I awake?

Queen. 'Tis not a dream—it is a cruel truth.
Rest here upon this bosom, Margaret,
And heed not him who basely hath renounced
The love to which his vows were pledged to Heaven.

Margaret. It cannot be. Chide not my loving lord—
For I am sure he loves me, though his griefs,
And the great wrong he suffered from my father,
Now clothe his speech with harshness. Dearest queen,

Solicit with me for my husband's love:
The rest, my father's pardon, then may follow.
Carpio [*aside*]. Let me think only of Saldana's fate—
Let me not see her tears, nor hear her voice.
Margaret. Bernardo, husband, do not cast me off;
For I so love thee that the pang were worse
To lose thee than the bitterness of death.
But if we *must* part (oh, sustain me, Heaven!),
If for no fault of mine you must withdraw
The love that once you bore me, do it not
With such abruptness. Let me lose it, rather,
By slow degrees, that so I may have time
To fortify my heart, else it will break.
Carpio [*aside*]. Look down upon me, spirit of my father!
Aid me to keep my oath.
Margaret. Turn not away
Your eyes—look on me—speak to me, Bernardo.
Carpio. Margaret——
Margaret. I'll cling to you, until your glance
Grows kind again.
Carpio. Rise, Margaret. I would
That I could take the burden of your woe,
And add it to my own. And yet your pangs
Can be but feathers to my ponderous grief;
For woman's breast could not abide the throes
That rend me now as earthquakes rend the hills.
Rise, Margaret.
Margaret. That I were dead!
Carpio [*aside*]. That wish
Has pierced me like a sword. [*Aloud*]. My honoured queen,
Into your charge I do commit my wife.
Nay, do not speak. Tend her and love her well;
And may such blessings as outlive these ills
Pertain unto you both. Farewell—farewell!
Margaret. Bernardo, oh, Bernardo, do not leave me!
If we must part, be merciful, and kill me.
[*Clasps him round the neck.*
Carpio. It is our last embrace. One kiss—but no—

It would profane thee. If thou canst, forgive me.

[*Exit* CARPIO.

Margaret [*faintly*]. Lend me thy hand, dear queen—
my mother now!
Father and husband—I have lost them both;
If I should lose thee too?

Queen. My own dear child,
Fear not for that. Alas! what ails thee, sweet?

Margaret. Nothing, my dearest mother—all is well—
But do not leave me—do not leave me, mother.

[*She falls unconscious in the* QUEEN'S *arms.*

Queen. Look up—speak, speak to me—or I shall think
This cruel blow has killed thee. Margaret!
Oh look upon me! Margaret—awake!

Margaret. It rends—it burns—it crushes me!

Queen. Alas!
Her mind is wandering.

Margaret. It racks my heart—
When will it kill me?

Queen. Margaret!

Margaret. Who calls
On hapless Margaret? Mine eyes are weak—
Scorched to their sockets by the lightning's glare—
I cannot see you.

Queen. Know you not my voice?

Margaret. I'll press my forehead, and then try to think.
Are you the queen?

Queen. Ay, Margaret.

Margaret. If I
Could only weep, I should remember all;
But weep I cannot, for the fount is dry
That did secrete my tears. There is a thought
Of nameless horror weighs like lead upon me;
But whether 'tis the memory of a dream,
Or a dark truth, I know not. Oh, my queen,
Hide nothing from me! Tell me, was *he* here?

Queen. Thy husband left but now.

Margaret. Oh, Heaven! then all
That I have feared is dread reality,

And not a fancy. He has cast me off—
Severed the sacred bond that made us one—
Withdrawn from me his love—and I am left
To wither in my loneliness. I would
My miseries were buried with my hopes,
And that the melancholy end of all,
Which soon must come, were an accomplished thing;
For then, perchance, the thought that his unkindness
Had wrought my doom, would win me back at least
A little of the love that I have lost.

Queen. Dear Margaret——

Margaret. What have I ever done
Deserving of this punishment? I loved—
And that was all my crime. Oh, fatal love!
Because I clung to him, the king my father
For ever has renounced me; and because
I am my father's daughter, even now
My lord has cast me off. On either hand
My spirit is chastised, and those opposed
In all things else do coincide in this—
That I must suffer.

Queen. Dost thou love the king?

Margaret. He is my father—you have told me so—
And therefore I must love him.

Queen. If indeed
You love him, conquer for the time this grief,
And join with me to save his life.

Margaret. His life?
My father's life? Oh, God! and can it be
That he must die? For what? What has he done?
How is his life in danger, and from whom?
If it should be from Carpio, do not speak,
But tell me by a sign, lest mighty Jove
Hear the dread tale, and his avenging bolt
Hurl down upon my lord. It is enough—
I understand thee—come.

Queen. I have been barred
The entry to Alfonso's cell; to you
It may be free. I'll lead you to the place.

Margaret. Away with every thought of my own sorrows.

I will not weep, nor think upon myself;
Only of him, dear queen—of him! Come on. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Dungeon: Lights half down.*

The KING, *asleep; and* CARLOS, *discovered.*

Carlos. He murmurs in his sleep. 'Tis thus for years
His rest has been disturbed. The tremor 's past—
Let him sleep on. Hark! Who is there?

Enter RODRIGO.

Rodrigo. My lord,
I have but now received del Carpio's order
To liberate you.

Carlos. Does my liege leave with me?

Rodrigo. He waits the issue of del Carpio's pleasure.

Carlos. Then I stay with him: where my monarch is
I likewise must be found.

Rodrigo. It cannot be—
My orders are to see you from the castle.

Carlos. I will remain a prisoner—dost thou hear?
Awake, my liege.

King [*in his sleep*]. Will no one rid me of him?
'Tis but a shadow, slaves—is he not dead?

Carlos. My noble lord.

King. Ha! Carlos, is it thou?

Carlos. Monarch, these rebels seek to separate us.
Carpio has sent an order for my freedom;
But I'll remain, and baffle his design.
He would but murder thee.

King. 'Tis Heaven's own hand
Sends this relief. Accept thy liberty.
Hark in thine ear. Our scattered troops can still
Be in my name collected. Nearer yet—
He must not overhear. [*Whispers.*

Carlos. But if your death——

King. How would your presence shield me if they sought

My life even now? Your part is to obey.
Farewell.

Carlos [*kneeling, kisses the* KING'S *hand*]. Farewell.
Pray Heaven we meet again.

[*Exeunt* CARLOS *and* RODRIGO. *The stage becomes gradually dark.*

King. Amen! Alone—and *here!* Oh, horrible!
Carlos, return—I cannot bear to live
Here—HERE! It is too late. I hear
The heavy closing of the outer door—
The ponderous bars—the clanking of the chains
That tell me he is gone from me. Alone!
'Twas here my victim perished. What of that?
He robbed the nunnery, and did deserve
The fate he met. And yet *I* might have felt
Compunction for his sufferings. Was his fault
Greater than mine, that he should expiate
His crime within this horrid cell; while I,
Who broke my vow of chastity, and loved
As once I loved! should wear the royal purple,
And hope for greater glory when this frame
Should rot in earth, and the mistaken priests
Should canonize my memory? Ah, no!
The issue of my crime lives to confront me—
Margaret my child—and is Bernardo's wife.
But they know nothing. Hark! Methought I heard
Saldana's voice calling me—murderer!
O miserable me! Here—here he lay,
For years, years, years, unending, tedious years,
Sending his groans along the echoing vault,
Which would not stifle or absorb the sound,
But like a mocking fiend would roll it back
With hateful repetition to his ears,
Till the whole place would seem a peopled hell,
With all its terrors—all its tortures, his—
Without its fellowship in woe. And I
Yet bear this sin-stained form aloft! Sink—sink—
Sink in the earth, vile frame—there crouch for ever!

[*Throws himself on the ground.*

A pause: then enter CARPIO *and* RODRIGO, *the latter carrying a Lamp which he lays on Table.*

Carpio. Where is he? On the earth? Leave me.
[*Exit* RODRIGO.
What ho!
Rouse from thy degradation, king. Bernardo
Bids thee right welcome to his father's cell.
King. Is't thou—and have *thine* eyes beheld me thus?
Carpio. No more of sackcloth and of ashes—rise.
Now, by my halidame! you're well provided
With articles of comfort here. Methinks
Saldana must have passed a merry time
Within these walls. Accept my thanks, O king!
I'll study to repay his debt to thee.
King. What wouldst thou with me?
Carpio. Marry, I have come
To have with thee some pleasant interchange
Of social talk ere yet we part for ever.
Be seated, king. Be seated, I command thee.
Wilt thou deny thy host so small a favour?
King. Traitor, I am thy king. What thou dost force
I must, perforce, endure. I know thy power
Can give me to the rack or death; but while
My limbs are unconstrained, and my will free,
I still will act the king.
Carpio. But not the tyrant,
As thou didst once. Dost thou remember, king,
When at thy feet I knelt, and humbly sued,
And thou didst spurn my suit; although I came
Graced with proud victory, and rich in spoils,
Which were for thee? Dost thou remember, too,
That with a base and hell-born subterfuge,
Thou didst beguile me to yield up my castle,
Disband my troops, and trust unto thine honour,
For my dear father's liberation; then
Yielded him up a corpse, and deemed thy promise
Amply fulfilled? Consult thy memory farther:
Recall the hour I interposed and saved thee

From the fierce Arab. Think upon the blood
That blots thy name from out the book of life.
Then ask thy conscience, king, if history
Can show a name degraded like to thine—
With hate—hypocrisy—ingratitude—
Unsanctified revenge—and that worst sin
Which sets the mark of Cain upon thy brow,
And names thee—an assassin!

King. Saldane's crime
Deserved its punishment.

Carpio. Darest thou urge
His crime to me? His darkest crime was this—
That thou didst hate him.

King. In marrying thy mother,
He did degrade me in the sight of Heaven,
And made me break my vow to God.

Carpio. Thy vow!
And hast thou broke no other vow but that?
Or is the rumour false which charges thee
With having made a breach of that dread oath
Sworn to secure thy body's chastity?
The *chaste* Alfonso! Did the world but know thee!

King. Dost thou know——

Carpio. All—that Margaret is thy daughter.

King. Thy speech is idle—thy assertion false.
Thou hast no proof.

Carpio. Thou shallow liar! Proof?
Thy limbs were nerveless when thou heard'st my charge—
Thy cheek is blanched—thy lips are livid still—
Thine eyes shrink from my gaze. These are my proofs.
Villain and murderer! Thy monstrous crimes,
Striking the earth with horror and amaze,
Have drawn Man's sentence on thee. Wilt appeal
From Man to Heaven? Lo, here am I, Heaven sent
To be thy judge—thy executioner!

King. Away, away!

Carpio. Look on these walls—this floor.

King. No, no, I cannot.

Carpio [*seizing him*]. Nay, thou shalt.

King. Forbear!

Carpio. Slimy, and foul with damp—green with corruption
Of scaly insects that have crusted there—
A noisome hole for rats! Was this a palace
Worthy of such a hero as Saldana?
Shall it be thine as well?

King. Oh, horror, horror!
No more, no more!

Carpio. Note this inscription—read it—
Cut in the rock—"Saldana, wronged by king—
Forgot by wife—deserted by his son—"
And then the word—"Revenge!"

King. Oh, mercy, mercy!

Carpio. Ay, mercy—such as thou didst show my father.
Thine hour is come. See yonder, through the gloom,
His ghostly form arise. He points to thee.
It *shall* be done. Monarch, prepare to die.

King. Not here—take me from hence—then, if thou wilt,
Strike at my life.

Carpio. My father, look upon
The deed which doth achieve thy vengeance! Now!

[*He is about to strike, when* MARGARET *enters, and rushes in between them, standing in a protecting attitude over the* KING.

END OF ACT THE FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Vault: Lamps suspended from the Ceiling: the Tomb of* SALDANA, *representing him in armour, with all the honors of a Knight who had died victorious.*

CARPIO *discovered, kneeling before the Monument;* VELASQUEZ *and others behind.*

DIRGE, *sung without.*

In the cold and silent tomb
Now thou liest:
In its sad and secret gloom,
Which the day shall ne'er illume,
Peaceably thou liest.
Rest and joy be with thy soul.
Toll the bell, toll, toll!
Peace and joy be with thy soul.
Toll, toll, toll!

Carpio. Amen! My bosom's lightened of a weight
Which pressed upon me sullenly, and seemed
To co-exist with this now aimless life.
There is a sad and solemn peace within me—
Or rather an oblivion—for I feel
As I had passed into another world—
Into a dull and universal void
From whence, afar, my memory yet sees
The clouded earth, while Lethe sleeps between.
Velasquez.

Velasquez [*coming forward*]. My dear lord.

Carpio. Resolve me this:
What is the secret virtue of revenge
That we to gain it sacrifice our rest,
Our peace of mind, all that we value most,
As trifles that we care not to possess?

Revenge should be the greater acquisition,
Else wherefore the exchange?

Velasquez. We sometimes use
The word revenge to mean the thing it is not.
When punishment is sought of an offender,
'Tis not revenge, but justice.

Carpio. When I gaze
Upon the sacred tomb of my dead sire;
When I think o'er my mother's wrongs and his—
Their blighted loves—the penance of *her* life—
His glorious manhood blasted—the long years
Of misery that he endured, far worse
In its slow tortures than the keenest pangs
That ope' the door for death—and, last of all,
The deed that ended all his earthly woes—
I feel myself a wretch beneath contempt
That now I live, and cannot say—"Sleep on—
Your wrongs have been avenged!"

Velasquez. The dead, perchance,
Might not exact such duty at your hands.

Carpio. Oh, Heaven, that I could think so! Who is here?

Enter GONSALEZ.

'Tis Gonsalez. What is the matter! speak.

Gonsalez. The king, my lord, lies murdered in his dungeon.

Carpio. Murdered! Great Heaven! murdered! Not my hand
Has done the deed, nor voice directed it.
I am not guilty, Margaret! Yet my conscience
Accuses me, as I had borne the knife,
Or with these fingers strangled him. I wished
His death, yet dared not take his life. Who is he
That hath done this? Set the accursed slave
Before me, and the terror of mine eye
Shall strike him dead.

Gonsalez. The gaoler who kept guard
Upon the cell has fled, which seems to fix
The crime on him.

Carpio. I'll hunt him to his den
Of refuge, though 'twere on the farthest bounds
Of the broad earth, and hurl him o'er the verge
Into the black abyss of space beneath!
Velasquez. Let me entreat you——
Carpio. Do not speak to me.
My Margaret, wilt thou endure me now?
Wilt thou believe me guiltless of his death?
But thou shalt have a great, a just revenge—
Dread, pitiless, eternal, merciless,
And inextinguishable—which the fiends
Shall gaze upon, and fall in wonder back
To see their deeds by mortal hands excelled!
[*A shriek without.*
What shriek is that?
Velasquez. The lady Margaret.
Carpio. Let me avoid her—come with me, Velasquez.
[*They retire to back.*

Enter MARGARET.

Margaret. Where is my husband? Where is Carpio?
Will no one answer me?
Gonsalez. Most gracious lady——
Margaret. I wish to ask him of the king, my father.
Carpio. Oh, misery!
Margaret. What voice is that? Who hears me?
Shall a king's daughter be unmarked, unanswered?
Velasquez—Gonsalez—I know ye both.
How doth the king, my father? Is he well?
Gonsalez. Ay, lady, he is well.
Margaret. Art sure of that?
I'll not be satisfied until I hear it
From Carpio's lips.
Velasquez. My noble lord——
Carpio. Who doubts
The dead are well? Ha! Margaret, is it thou?
Margaret. Where is my father? Dost thou fear to answer?
I saw the mangled remnant of his corpse,
Bleeding and headless. O'er his regal robes

The clotted gore was spattered, and some hairs,
White as the snow upon our mountain tops,
Were fastened in his blood. Broken beside him
Lay fragments of his crown, and some stray jewels
Glittered around upon his dungeon floor.
'Tis all before me now—I see it all:
The corpse—the crown—the bloody battle axe
That did the deed—the tokens of the struggle—
The broken furniture—the solemn walls,
Rising in awful gloom—the frowning roof—
The one pale streak of light—Oh, horrible!

Carpio. Oh! Gonsalez, my heart is reft in twain!

Margaret. Peace, peace, my father; we shall yet be happy.

I know that Saldane lives—thou wouldst not kill him.
We shall be happy yet. Oh, peace, peace, peace!
Doubt not my Carpio's love.

Carpio. Oh, agony!

Margaret. Sleep, father, I will watch. What light is that?

Ha, see, they come! My heart forbodes their mission—
And look—the foremost of the murderers
Is Carpio! Oh, mercy, mercy—spare him!

Carpio. I'm innocent, my Margaret. By Heaven!
I knew not of his murder.

Margaret. Take me hence—
Let me not see him.

Carpio. By the saints above us——

Margaret. Ah! do not touch me.

Carpio. By the worlds hereafter—
By the great Power that made both them and us—
The dark conception labouring in thy mind
Is bitter wrong to me.

Margaret. Let me look on thee.
Those eyes I loved—gazed they upon my father—
Saw they his reverend face, and his grey hairs—
Yet were not moved to pity? Did those lips
Which I have kissed—whose vocal harmony
Entranced my soul—did they with accents stern
Pronounce my father's doom? Was this the hand

That struck my father down? Was this the hand
That robbed him of his life? It cannot be
But this is so. Ha! see—look yonder—there!
Carpio [*attempting to hold her*]. My Margaret——
Margaret. Away—there's blood upon thee!
See you not there—my father's spirit. Hence!
Speak to me, father. Oh, that piteous look
Might melt the sternest heart—save only one.
Carpio. My soul's own idol——
Margaret. Pray you, sir, forbear.
Who are you, sir? Your face is strange to me.
I do entreat, detain me not. I am
The daughter of a king. Do you not see
My father waiting for me yonder? Sir,
I will not be withheld. I come—I come.

[*Exit* MARGARET. CARPIO *is about to follow, but seems overcome; and, unable to speak, motions to be left alone. Exeunt all but* CARPIO *and* GONSALEZ, *the latter at first unobserved by* CARPIO.

Carpio. Are you not gone? Methinks I lack of power
Being attended thus against my will.
Gonsalez. My lord, I will not leave you.
Carpio. By the saints——
Gonsalez. They will approve my purpose. Once, my lord,
I served the brave Medina as his page.
Some direful sorrow preyed upon his heart,
And he conjured me by the love I bore him,
To quit his presence, that he might indulge
His griefs in solitude. I did refuse,
And he commanded. I, alas! obeyed.
Carpio. Well!
Gonsalez. I returned anon, and found him dead:
With fatal hand, in his rash mood, he struck
At his own life.
Carpio. How point you this at me?
Gonsalez. When he desired me leave him, I observed
A strange, unsettled glance within his eyes,

As if from forth those windows of his soul
A demon glared. If I had but remained,
My master might be living still. My lord,
The self-same look is now within your eyes,
And, to avert from you the like dark fate,
Against your wishes will I tarry here.

Carpio. Give me your hand: I pray you, place it here.
[*Holding it to his heart.*
Feel you the fearful turmoil of my blood,
Leaping and gushing like a winter torrent?

Gonsalez. My lord, your pulse is calm.

Carpio. As calm as yours?

Gonsalez. Even so.

Carpio. See you the demon in my eyes?

Gonsalez. Why ask you this?

Carpio. Why pause you to reply?

Gonsalez. Your looks are calm, now, and your pulse is still.

Carpio. And yet a fiend 's within me—say you so?

Gonsalez. My lord——

Carpio. Why, look you, do you think your presence,
If I be bent upon my own destruction,
Will bar the execution of my will?
Think you your sight is sharp enough to catch
The subtle motion of my hand when raised
Against my life in time for you to seize
The swift descending steel? Here's to make trial.

[*Suddenly draws dagger, and attempts to stab himself.* GONSALEZ *holds his hand.*

Your eyes are quicker than I thought they were.
Here, take my dagger—there are other means
Wherewith to die.

Gonsalez. Upon my knees——

Carpio. Stand up.
Why should I live? Say, what is life to me
But a foul, violent, and hideous night,
Black, starless, and contentious? Come, grim Death,
And bear me to thy melancholy home:
There let thy lover sigh his soul away

In the embraces of thy swarthy arms!

Enter VELASQUEZ.

Velasquez, speak.

Velasquez. I almost dread to do so.
The lady Margaret, in her distraction,
Hath left the city.

Carpio. How did she escape?

Velasquez. She fastened to a window in her chamber
(Which, as you know, looks o'er the city's wall)
Cloths tied together, and descending by them
Slid safely to the ground. She was observed,
Just as she reached it, by a sentinel,
Who called to her aloud. Hearing his voice,
She cried,—"On, father, on!"—as to a spirit
Which her distempered fancy bodied forth:
Then, fleeing, vanished in the gloom of night.

Carpio. Good angels, guard her—do not let her perish
On the bleak hills! Which way departed she?
Alas, poor broken heart! Thy father's death——

Velasquez. You are deceived—the king is living still.

Carpio and Gonsalez. The king not dead!

Velasquez. The body that we found,
Being examined, proves to be his gaoler's.

Carpio. His gaoler? What, Rodrigo? Ha! 'tis clear—
I see it all! Lord Carlos was admitted—
He slew Rodrigo, and defaced his person—
Garments were changed—then in the gaoler's dress,
The king escaped with Carlos.

Gonsalez. You are sure
The corpse was not the king's?

Velasquez. There is no doubt.

Carpio. Come on—let us not waste the precious moments.
Let all the country round be searched—who finds her
I will reward as may become a prince.
Let's not delay. I'll take one path myself—
You others. Come. Oh Heaven! restore her safe—
Safe to these arms; then, as Thou wilt, deal with me.
Upon this sacred tomb I pray a blessing
For this our enterprise.

Gonsalez. Doubt not, my lord,
But we shall find her.
Carpio. In that hope I live.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*On the Sierra de Naranco—Snow-covered Country: Night.*

Enter MARGARET.

Margaret. Still they pursue me. But in vain they strive
To overtake me. 'Tis not *my* weak will—
Not my own power—that gifts with speed these limbs—
With speed that leaves the wild wind murmuring
That fails to sweep along through space as I do.
I feel as I were borne upon the wings
Of essences ethereal—that to leap
From mighty rock to mighty rock, across
The unbridged gulf between, were easier
Than to step lightly o'er the marble floors
Of Oviedo's palace. Ha! I see
My father on yon cliff. I will approach
With caution, lest he see me. Has he gone?
Speak, father, speak! Thou mountain wind; be lulled,
That he may hear his daughter's voice! Speak, father!
'Tis strange he will not answer—strange, strange, strange.
Thrice before this I saw him through the night,
Standing upon some dizzy peak—his robe
Whiter than snow. I called to him aloud—
Then, with a shriek, he leapt into the air,
And vanished in the elements. 'Tis strange!
This mystery o'ermasters my weak brain—
The clue, I cannot find it out. Oh, father!
Dost thou renounce me—dost thou shun my sight—
Because I loved thine enemy? Oh, Carpio!
Still must I love thee, even while I abhor
Thy bloody vengeance. Ah! 'tis cold, cold, cold!

I'll seek me out a bed of snow, and make
A pillow of this little arm, and rest—
Rest, rest, rest, rest—in the eternal sleep!

[*Exit.*

A pause: then a distant horn. Enter RAMIRO, *and some of the* KING'S *Soldiers.*

Ramiro. This way the horn did sound. But are you sure
That Carpio is amongst them?

First Soldier. I myself
Did see him as he passed from out the gate,
And noted that he shortly from the rest
Did separate.

Ramiro. Go, one of you; inform
The king of what has chanced. Bring more assistance.

[*Exit a Soldier.*

Now let us on; and should we find the traitor,
Ask for your recompense; it shall be paid
Ungrudgingly. Give me a torch. Lead on.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The same.*

CARPIO *discovered, supporting* MARGARET, *who is insensible.*

Carpio. Cold as the snow she lay in, and as white!
Live once again—forget the bitter past—
And I will lavish on thee such a love—
So mighty and unbounded—as ne'er yet
Man did bestow on woman. Did she breathe?
Or is it but the throbbing of my brain
Deceives me? Ha! my sword! If she still live,
Her breath will show upon the polished steel.

[*Places his sword to her lips, then anxiously examines the blade.*

It is too dark. Oh, for some kindly star
That would illume the blackness of the night!

I'm mad to stay here. Gonsalez—what ho!
Tut, tut! he cannot hear. [*Sounds his horn*] Now wrap her close,
And bear her onward to some place of shelter.
[*He folds his mantle round* MARGARET, *and is raising her, when she utters a deep sigh.*
Oh, Heaven, she lives! Speak, speak, my Margaret.
Margaret. Where am I?
Carpio. On thy husband's breast.
Margaret. Away!
Carpio. She shudders at my touch. My worshipped one!
Sweet angel! light of life! do not shrink from me.
I know thou chargest me with having caused
Thy father's death; but learn, thy father lives.
[MARGARET *shrieks.*
What have I done?
Margaret. I saw him in his blood——
Carpio. Not him.
Margaret. I saw him headless on the earth——
Carpio. It was Rodrigo whom thou saw'st; the king,
Thy father lives.
Margaret. And *since* then, all in white—
Now treading firmly the unstable wind—
Anon descending on some lofty mount—
Now leaping headlong o'er the mighty crags—
Then upright rising from a murky pool!
Carpio. 'Twas but thy fancy.
Margaret. Carpio, Carpio, hence!
Thy hands are crimson with my father's blood.
I do forgive thee—from my heart of hearts
I pardon thee: but oh! the bitter world
Pays wrong with wrong, and life demands for life.
See you not there?
Carpio. What?
Margaret. They that come to seek you.
Carpio. Dear Margaret, chase these phantasies away.
Margaret. I do not dream. Look there—see for thyself.
RAMIRO, *and a number of the* KING'S *adherents, have entered at back. They advance:* CARPIO *seizes his sword.*

Carpio. What wouldst thou with me? Speak.
Ramiro. I am thy foe;
Ramiro is my name.
Carpio. Wherefore my foe?
Shall I inform thee, valiant prince and soldier?
Because I plucked this jewel from thy hand
Which, felon like, thou stolest from my breast.
Ramiro. I come not here to bandy useless words
With thee, rebellious one, cast out by fate
To ruin and despair.
Carpio. 'Tis likely, sir—
Thou fearest not the *fallen* citadel,
But shrinkest, coward, while it stands erect.
Ramiro. In the king's name, I charge thee to surrender,
Yielding that lady to my care.
Carpio. Rash insolent!
I do defy thee, and thy myrmidons.
If, as thou say'st, my fortunes are o'ercast,
Even in my ruin do I dare thee on,
Reckless of what may hap to me, content
If I but crush thee, serpent, in my fall!
Ramiro. Thy blood be on thy head. Upon him!
Margaret. Hold!

[*She rushes between her husband and his assailants. Meanwhile the Soldiers attending on* RAMIRO *have charged with their spears against* CARPIO. *They withdraw, discovering* CARPIO *and* MARGARET, *who are both mortally wounded.* CARPIO *supports* MARGARET, *who clings to him.*

At the same instant, the KING, CARLOS, *and several of the* KING'S *adherents, enter at one side,* GONSALEZ, VELASQUEZ, FERDINAND, GARCIAS, *&c., entering at the other.*

King. I dread to ask! Speak—tell me what has happened.
Carpio. Your vengeance has recoiled upon yourself—
Behold your daughter, king, slain by your friends.
King. Forgive me, Heaven!
Carpio. I am faint—support me.

[CARPIO *is about to fall,* GONSALEZ *supports him,*
CARPIO *still holding* MARGARET.

Gonsalez. Oh, my loved lord! is this the end of all?

Carpio. Even so. Thanks, Gonsalez! Now, gentle one,
Have I proved false to thee and to my love?

Margaret. My own Bernardo, 'tis my keenest pang
To know how deeply I have wronged thy heart.

Carpio. Grieve not for that!

Margaret. I am the cause of all.

Carpio. Nay, kiss me, sweet. Let me bend down to thee.

[*He sinks on one knee, and kisses her.*

Our loves were evil-starred upon the earth;
But now we go to find another sphere
Where sorrow and misfortune are unknown,
And we may love for ever, and for ever!

Margaret. For ever, and for ever, and for ever!

Carpio. Pray, pray for that!

[*The* KING *kneels to* CARPIO, *supplicatingly.*

I do forgive thee freely.
Good night, my friends—good night for evermore.
Cling to my breast, my love—cling close—cling close!

[*They die.*

THE END.

Walker, May, & Co., Printers, 9 Mackillop Street, Melbourne.

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